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ABSTRACT

This ethnographic study investigated informal and unregulated child care in a white, ethnic, working class community in a Northeastern city, which is identified by the pseudonym "East Urban." The study includes stories about families of second and third generation descendants of mainly Italian immigrants who live in the close-knit communities where they were born. During 7 months of fieldwork, 50 formal interviews were completed with community representatives, parents, and caregivers; 25 were tape-recorded. Interviews were transcribed, summarized, and entered into a computerized, text-based data management system. Notes on unrecorded interviews and field observations were also entered into the system. Each section of data was indexed according to categories of content and the characteristics of the informant. The study revealed that even in this very traditional group, sole reliance on relatives and neighbors for child care is no longer realistic. Although informal and unregulated arrangements can be of good quality, the supply is no longer adequate. The study concludes that any national policy must respect the cultural settings in which people make choices about their children. Only by building policies that respect the cultural fabric of local communities can the quest for an effective national policy succeed. (RH)

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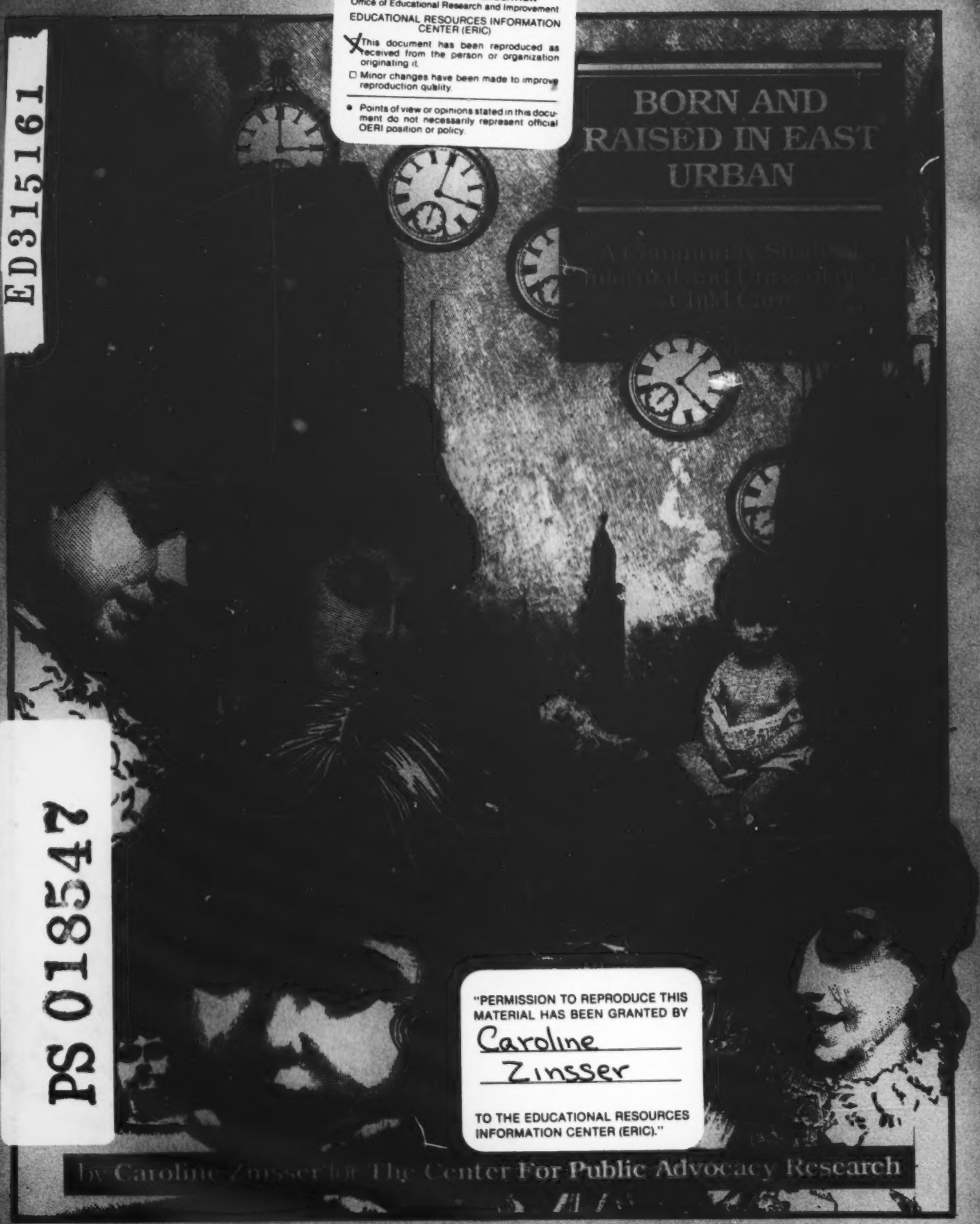
BORN AND RAISED IN EAST URBAN

A Community Survey of Housing and Unmet Child Care Needs



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Born and Raised in East Urban

A Community Study of Informal and Unregulated Child Care

by

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Summary

Although they account for more than two-thirds of all child care arrangements, informal and unregulated child care settings are the least researched segment of child care. Most of these arrangements are with relatives; the rest are with "babysitters." This is a study of informal and unregulated child care in one community in a city in the Northeast, which we call East Urban. The research is based on interviews with community members, and the report centers on their stories.

The focus of the study is on white, ethnic, working class neighborhoods where people refer to themselves as the Born and Raised. These are families of second and third generation descendants of mainly Italian immigrants who live in the close-knit communities where they were born.

Born and Raised parents come from a tradition of clearly differentiated roles for men and women, with mothers ideally staying at home to care for their young children while fathers are employed as the sole financial support of their families. If, by necessity, child care was called for, Born and Raised parents in the past have relied on their families and well-known, trusted neighbors. They have avoided child care by "outsiders," including professional caregivers in day care centers.

East Urban, however, like other American cities, is changing. The old neighborhoods are disappearing, due to a combination of economic and social forces. Households are now dependent on the financial support of mothers' as well as fathers' employment. Families are smaller and the number of relatives available for child care is shrinking. Born and Raised "babysitters" are in short supply and are increasingly in the employ of professional career families.

Those Born and Raised women who do act as "babysitters" choose the work as an extension of their traditional roles of mother and housekeeper. Working outside any system of government financial support, state regulation, or professional child development practice, they devise their own rules, which are based on local community values. In the absence of government financial support, they in effect subsidize their services by charging according to what parents can pay. Partly because their wages are so low, they operate "off the books" to avoid paying taxes. They can provide affectionate, safe, reliable care. But in the absence of formal training, their child care is modeled on the folkways of their community rather than on professional standards of child development.

East Urban's Born and Raised families are struggling to reconcile a way of life inherited from the past with new economic and social realities. This study documents how these parents must often endure low incomes and heavy workloads in order to keep their ideals intact while maintaining their families in a changed economy. The Born and Raised community is no longer able to care for its own. Parents now need outside, government-sponsored assistance in caring for their children. The study reveals how, even within this very traditionally-minded group, sole reliance on relatives and neighbors for child care is no longer realistic. Although informal and unregulated arrangements can be of good quality, the supply is no longer adequate to the need.

The study concludes that any national policy must respect the cultural settings in which people make choices about their children. Those concerned with children's care need to recognize the strengths of what is already in place and to support quality child care no matter what its auspices, whether by relatives, by trusted neighbors, by regulated family day care providers, or by licensed day care centers. Only by building policies that also respect the cultural fabric of local communities can we expect to succeed in our quest for an effective national policy.

Introduction

How are children cared for when their parents are employed? This question has become the subject of national debate as legislators at federal, state, and local levels wrestle with child care legislation. Increasingly, as child care is seen as a necessary underpinning to our national economy, what we once viewed as largely the responsibility of families is accepted as a matter for public policy.

We have very little research on which to solve these policy debates. Most research has been conducted in day care centers, yet this type of care accounts for only about one-fourth of child care arrangements. About a half is by relatives, and another fourth is by non-relatives, usually family day care providers working in their own homes. According to the most recent Census Bureau data, working parents whose youngest child was under five used the following as their principal child care arrangement:

- 24% by child's mother or father
- 16% by child's grandparent
- 8% by other relatives
- 28% by non-relatives (22% in another home)
- 23% by organized child care facilities[1]

The most prevalent arrangements for child care are those about which we know the least--informal and unregulated arrangements operating outside the sphere of government regulation. Most of this care is by relatives who are not required to be regulated. Another segment is by "in-home" child care workers who are employed by parents in their own homes and are therefore exempt from child care regulation. The rest is by family day care providers where the care of the child is in the home of the person providing the care.

Family day care can be by well-known friends and neighbors or it can be by strangers--providers whom parents do not know personally or who are not tied to the community. It is in regard to the latter type of family day care--care by outsiders--that concern for public regulation has been strongest. Most states regulate family day care by licensing or registering, and those family day care providers who do not comply are operating against the law. Nevertheless, a large percentage of family day care providers work "off the books," whether or not they are subject to regulation.[2] The

informal and unregulated status of these arrangements makes them particularly difficult as a subject for research. Gaining access to communities of working parents and to groups of unregulated child care providers is difficult for the researcher who seeks to interview at length.

Yet if we rely only on large scale survey and quantitative research, we may lose sight of real families in real situations. We will have overall figures of what child care arrangements parents make, but we won't know how people in different communities go about making these decisions, what choices are available to them, and what their standards are for judging the quality of child care. What we can't measure through statistics is the cultural context in which parents and caregivers operate--the deep-seated beliefs about the roles of mothers and fathers; theories of how best to bring up children; and sources of class, ethnic or racial identity. We cannot make blanket assumptions about how parents make child care choices, nor can we assume that all families seek a single model of desirable care. We lack information on what different kinds of families in different circumstances would choose for themselves *in terms of their own expectations*.

Although child care is based on the economics of supply and demand, it is by its nature also idiosyncratic in ways affected by life circumstances and culturally-determined beliefs. Far from being a monolithic system, child care arrangements result from the complicated and highly variable interaction of small units of demand with small units of supply.

Much of the discussion about child care policy has been directed at the question of what the government's role should be in regard to informal and unregulated care. To what extent should these arrangements be subsidized with government funds? Are these arrangements sufficient to meet most parents' needs? Are these arrangements what parents want, or do parents settle for informal and unregulated care because they have no other options? Until we know more about informal and unregulated care--about the parents who use it and the providers who offer it--we will not be able to make wise policy decisions in answer to these questions.

The purpose of this research was to study one community's child care arrangements. It is a study that is told through stories. The people I interviewed are not meant to statistically represent any one segment of our national population. Although they are undoubtedly similar to many other people living in comparable communities, they speak, not at as prototypes, but as individuals. By recording their stories I hope

to document the realities of child care in one community as an illustration of the complexities of forging national child care policies.

Methodology

This is an ethnographic study of people circumscribed by a system of social relationships within one community. The ethnographic method is particularly suited to this kind of study. The goal of ethnography is to describe a setting in terms of its own internal rules and its meaning for those who are its participants. The data is then analyzed for patterns of behavior that in turn reflect a community's internal values. [3]

Given this objective, the validity of ethnographic research depends upon the accuracy with which the data from a specific situation is collected, analyzed, and described. The value of the research is as a case study and as an example of general theoretical principles rather than as a microcosm of the entire universe of all possible variations. [4]

Because choosing a suitable site was such an important part of the study, I spent several months investigating several possibilities. I did not want to select a site until I was confident that I could gain access to useful informants. I also wanted to find a community characterized by social coherence but not one so specialized as to be completely atypical. In the course of my search for a research site, I conducted discussion groups with working mothers in each community and established some general background information on parents' attitudes toward their child care arrangements.[5]

I finally selected a community (which I call "East Urban" to protect the identity of my informants) as my study site. Unlike newer communities, where neighbors may not know one another, East Urban has long-established neighborhoods, where the process of change over a period of time could be documented. It contained a sizable number of white, working class and lower middle class, mainly Italian, families. It was located in a state unusual because it had no regulation of family day care except a newly-instituted voluntary registration system. East Urban's only licensed child care was in five day care centers, three of them publicly subsidized, and it was through these, and with the cooperation of a neighborhood health facility, that I was able to establish initial access to the community.

During seven months of fieldwork I completed 50 formal interviews with community representatives, parents, and caregivers and was able to tape record 25 of these. I transcribed the tape recorded interviews and entered a summary of each, along with my notes on unrecorded interviews and my field observations, into a computerized text-based data management system. Each section of data was then indexed

according to categories of content and the characteristics of the informant. By means of this process, the categories were derived from the data rather than the reverse.

I found informants by word of mouth. Community representatives led me to parents. Parents led me to caregivers, and caregivers to other caregivers. My purpose was to study people who were interrelated by social interactions rather than to study a random sample. By relying on one informant to lead me to another I was able to trace the connections that brought parents and caregivers together and to explore the underlying social structures, as well as individual differences, which determined these choices.

Description of East Urban

East Urban is a small city in the Northeast. Its problems are those of many small cities within larger metropolitan areas. Its manufacturing base has shrunk and eliminated many low-skill jobs. Low-cost housing has become increasingly scarce under the pressures of gentrification. Neighborhoods of white, ethnic, blue collar workers, related as kin and sharing common immigrant experiences, are being broken up by a combination of economic and social forces.

In addition to its predominantly Italian working class population, East Urban has a large, low-income Hispanic population, mostly living in sub-standard housing. Its smaller and older black population lives mostly in the "projects," East Urban's subsidized housing. The most recent arrivals are Asian Indians and young urban professionals. East Urbanites complain about traffic, high taxes, poor schools, corrupt local government, and soaring rents. What is not so openly expressed are resentments between groups divided by race, ethnicity, and economic class.

During the 19th century East Urban grew and prospered with a thriving shipping business, a major railroad, and growing numbers of manufacturers. Early Dutch immigrants were followed by Germans, Irish, and Italians so that by 1910 the population had grown to over 70,000. After World War II East Urban's economy waned. Its shipping declined, and consequently its rail traffic was curtailed. Manufacturers departed for industrial parks in other parts of the state. During the nineteen sixties and early seventies East Urban lost about 1,000 jobs a year. Unemployment climbed and about one-quarter of the residents collected welfare.

At the same time that East Urban was losing jobs and its inhabitants' incomes were shrinking, a new wave of immigrants arrived from Puerto Rico, eventually making up 40% of the population by 1970. Since jobs were scarce, these newcomers had an unemployment rate twice as high as the rest of the city and were forced into the least desirable housing. During this period East Urban had the highest per capita welfare rate, the lowest educational achievement rate, and the lowest incomes in the state.

According to the 1980 Census Figures, East Urban's total population was 42,460. The largest number of people identifying themselves by a single ancestry group were Italian, followed by Irish and German. Forty percent were of Spanish origin and 5% were black. The median household income was $11,639, and the median family income $13,650. 23% of East Urban's population was earning below poverty level.

In the eighties East Urban began to recover. Young professional families who work in the nearby metropolitan city (which we call "City") started to move into East Urban in a process of gentrification. Attracted initially by low rents and relatively inexpensive row houses on tree-lined streets, young, affluent career families have refurbished crumbling turn-of-the-century buildings or moved into newly converted condominiums. As a result, rents have climbed dramatically, and the prices of houses have risen so high that many long-time residents have sold out and moved elsewhere.

New home purchasers have been recently surveyed and found to be markedly different from East Urban's long-term inhabitants. Half are between 26 and 30 years old and more than three-quarters are married with children. Eighty-five percent work in professional, arts, publishing, financial, and sales jobs. Sixty-five percent earn more than $50,000 a year.

Demographic projections show a decrease in population to 39,818 and a marked increase in median incomes to $18,279 per household and $19,919 per family. For those who work in East Urban rather than in the City, however, most jobs are still in manufacturing, the unemployment rate is 11%, and affordable housing is difficult to find.

These economic facts help explain the bitterness between ethnic and racial groups in East Urban. People identify themselves or others by three main categories: "Born and Raised," "Spanish," and "Americans" (or "Yuppies"). Other, smaller groups are identified as "Blacks," "Indians" (or "Hindus"), and "Asians" (or "Koreans"). Born and Raised East Urbanites are white and of predominantly Italian, Irish, and German heritage. The men hold blue collar jobs, and the women work in service, sales, or in such jobs as clerks or secretaries. The Spanish group is identified by language. Most are Puerto Rican but some are from other parts the Caribbean and from Central and South America. Many of the Spanish group were born and grew up in East Urban but do not identify themselves with the Born and Raised group. Americans are upper middle class, native-born whites. Yuppies, who are also Americans, are the young, affluent newcomers, who work in the nearby City. Although they might be of any race, they are almost all white. Each of these groups has its own cultural patterns and each, to at least some extent, views the others with animosity. Each group has a distinctive attitude toward child care.

Mary O'Malley: A Case Study

The story of Mary O'Malley (I have changed all names) illustrates how Born and Raised East Urbanites see themselves, as members of their group, as workers, as parents, and as caregivers. In line with the ethnographic goal of learning how child care is viewed by those within the community, I have used the title "babysitter" for caregivers who work in their own own homes, or in the children's parents' homes because this is the term most commonly used in East Urban.

I heard of Mary from a professional working mother who headed a pediatric unit in a City hospital. The mother lived in East Urban and was active in local politics, which meant that she got to know some Born and Raised whom she otherwise would not have met. While working on a local political campaign, she had met Mary's daughter, and it was through the daughter that I was able to contact Mary and to persuade her to be interviewed.

I found Mary's house on a block of small two-story row houses built for railroad and factory workers in the nineteenth century. Gentrification has so far made little progress here, although the block is beginning to be referred to as a "mews" by real estate agents, and houses that ten years ago sold for $5,000 or $10,000 now bring ten times as much. The number of newcomers to the block--young professionals seeking small "quaint" houses to remodel--are bound to increase, especially since, as Mary told me, there are now 13 widows over age 70 still living in the houses where they brought up their families. But for now the block is still, in the words of former resident, "eighty-five percent old East Urban," another way of saying Born and Raised.

These houses are smaller than most in East Urban. Front doors open directly onto the sidewalk with no stoop. Mary's door was protected by a little entryway decorated with Christmas tree lights although it was March. She is proud of the fact that she lives in a neighborhood where she doesn't have to lock her door, and I found when I arrived that she had left the front door wide open, protected only by an unlocked outer screen door.

Mary's grandmother came from Ireland to this block. ("She lived to be 97 without a gray hair in her head.") Mary grew up in a neighboring house, and she and her husband have brought up seven children of their own in their present house. Her grown children now live nearby; the youngest two are still at home.

The front door of Mary's house opened into a small living room. Beyond was the kitchen that also served as a dining room. Since there are only the two rooms downstairs, I wondered how the O'Malleys could fit two adults and their seven children--plus some others in child care--into this small space, but it was neat, and I sensed that it was not just picked up for visitors, but always neat. The front room was decorated most conspicuously and out of obvious pride with matching graduation photographs of the seven children. On an adjoining wall were the wedding photographs of the ones who had married.

Mary is an energetic 51. She's stocky rather than fat and looks strong and capable. Her hair is short and she's kept it the blond of her youth. Yet even with her sequin-decorated sweatshirt, worn with pants, she appeared more practical than glamorous. She struck me as not the type to dress up for an interview. From her attitude I got the message, "Here I am, take it or leave it." We sat at her ample kitchen table for the interview, and as we began talking, Mary capably finished feeding the baby boy she was taking care of and then put him down for a nap.

Mary has been a babysitter for eleven years, always in her own home. She stayed home with her children when they were small, but when her youngest started kindergarten, "I really thought I should go to work, with tuitions and all." She took a job with the county but figured that after taxes she was only earning $75 a week for full-time work and so quit after six months. At that point a friend who taught school asked Mary to babysit for her child. This suited Mary. "It was very easy. I liked to be home for my children if something happened. And my mother was getting on in age. She'd always helped me out so I liked being home for her. I was only five doors away." Another advantage was the mother's schoolteaching schedule, which coincided with the O'Malley children's hours, so that the mother could pick up her child just about when Mary's children came home from school and could also relieve Mary of babysitting responsibilities during school holidays and vacations.

The most children Mary has taken care of at once is three, and these were all from one family, the Lorings, whose children she cared for for seven years, taking one infant starting at eleven weeks and one at six weeks. The parents were professionals, the mother an executive of a major corporation and the father a lawyer. Mary took care of the children from 8 a.m. (or 6:30 a.m. if the parents were traveling, which was often the case) until at least 7 p.m.

Although Mary's arrangement with the Lorings was that she was responsible only for feeding the children lunch (and breakfast on the 6:30 days), she usually wound up feeding them supper as well. "With a big family I just cooked, and they usually ate supper here. If they were here, they were here." Mary now misses cooking for seven to ten children. "I don't know what to cook for just Jim and me," she complained. "Just two is crummy."

The Loring family have now moved to an affluent suburb, partly to find a better school system. Mary misses them "like family" and was planning a visit soon. She said that her older children regarded the little Lorings as almost like "their kids" and even included one of the girls in one of their weddings. They would help out by babysitting at the Lorings' at night and by taking Mary's place on the rare occasion when she was sick. The Lorings also miss Mary. They have gone through seven babysitters since moving from East Urban a year ago.

At the time the Lorings moved, they were paying Mary $275 a week for caring for the three children, one of whom, by that time, was in school and needed only after school care. At the beginning, eight years earlier, Mary started at $75 a week, and "they always gave me raises. I never had to ask for a raise," she reported with satisfaction. "Even now they give me beautiful gifts at Christmas and on birthdays. They got to be very family. I probably would have done it for nothing."

Mary has found her work for the Lorings and other middle class two-career parents satisfying. Her experience with taking care of the infant of less affluent parents was less successful.

> A minister had called me about a family that needed a babysitter very desperately. I said if it was only for a few weeks I would do it. But I didn't want the job. I like one baby or a family. So they brought it down. It was an Indian, and she desperately needed her job and all, blah- blah-blah. I said $75 a week.
>
> When Friday came, the husband came and picked up the baby. They were very irresponsible. They would come very late and forget the time. There was always stories. He gave me the money. I just put it in my pocket and didn't count it. When I did count it, it was $50.
>
> The second week when she came, I said, "You gave me $50." She said, "My husband said that's all I can pay you." I said, "That's not so. It's $75." She said, "I'll speak to him." That went on for two weeks, and then I refused the baby. They positively did not pay me the money.

> To them it was like that was my share and that was it. I said, "If you want me to babysit, you have to pay me." He said to me, "My wife will have to quit her job." I said, "What do you think this is? It's a job." I told them they couldn't pay me what I'm worth.
>
> But most people appreciate you. They were the only strange people I had. And they were people I didn't know. It's nicer if you kind of know the people.

Mary does not report her income for taxes and she has no idea of whether the parents of the children she cares for declare their child care expenses as a tax deduction. She uses her babysitting money "for all these different things the kids need. The extra money for school, the prom dresses. When Catherine got married, I had all the money saved for her shower and her wedding dress and all." She paused and then added with pride, "I gave that to Catherine myself."

Mary likes to babysit in her own home. "It's nice in your own home. You get your place together, and you can go," she said, explaining how she can do her own housework and then take the children on their daily trip to the park. She said of her middle class clientele, "All new mothers want you at their house, they want the baby there, and then after a week, they don't care--if they get to know you. The last one was funny," she said. "She came to examine the house and meet my family, which was really funny to me. At first she was very particular about me using the changing table and all. After a week, it positively was forgotten."

Mary won't babysit on weekends because they are reserved so that her own family can all be together. Her husband has always worked at two full-time jobs. As a maintenance worker in the schools and a postal worker, he leaves home at seven in the morning, comes home for supper from six to eight, and then goes back to work until midnight. "That's why our weekends were always together."

Mary has not held a long-term job outside the home since before her first child was born. After the Lorings moved away, she thought of taking an outside job, particularly since her mother died around that time. She and her mother had been very close. Mary had taken care of her mother in her old age, visiting her daily. Since Mary had been a telephone operator as a young woman, she decided to apply for that position and was hired. But she worked at the telephone company for only two weeks before quitting because her husband was "furious" at her for taking the job. Mary knows that she should be able to earn more money than she does at babysitting.

> I'm amazed that even when my kids take a part-time job, they make so much money. Maybe I could do that. I just don't know. I keep thinking everyone makes $10,000. Catherine is a secretary. She makes money like an executive. She says the more she makes, the less she does. She never types anymore. She's like an office manager for one of those stock places.

Mary conceded that part of her problem is that she "lacks confidence" in holding an outside job after 30 years at home, but when she babysits "I know I can do that. I threaten to really go to work," she said, "then a baby comes up, and that's it." Her present job is taking care of a six-month-old at $6 per hour, a rate she set after "I found out what everyone else was getting paid."

At one point, Mary had decided to try working in a day care center as a way to increase her income. She worked for two months at a state-subsidized center but found it unsatisfactory.

> They weren't going to hire me because I was too old, but after the interview, they hired me. One question was, "What would you do if a child bit another child?" I said, "I would take that child and probably shake it." They said, "But you can't do that." And I said, "But that's what I would have done." Then they gave me this big interview, and they said I had the job.
>
> The one that ran it, I thought was a little ridiculous. A lovely woman, but you could not have a chair in the room. Even when the children napped. I would go grab a rocker outside and sit down. She called me one day, and she said that I couldn't sit down, that I should clean and polish and do all this. I said, "I'm not cleaning. I'm here to mind children." I don't think that you can't sit on a chair and do things with children. That was ridiculous. You stayed eight hours, you were dead. Even the young girls were. And if you sat on the table, she would say, "Tables are made for glasses."
>
> They liked me because I would take care of the babies. We had babies in cribs, and I would feed them and change them. I had no problem with the children at all except it was just an awful lot of work for $8,000 a year. I would take them out for a walk, the ones that could walk. That didn't bother me. But you had to have a project every week to do with these kids. What could you do? The sand table? They were little. They'd say, "Don't you have any imagination?" I took them for a walk. I used to take my group out all the time to the park. I had no trouble.

I didn't like the girl who was the teacher. I said to her, "I didn't know you were a teacher." She said, "Well, I'm not a teacher, but the teacher left so I took over." Everybody was the boss. I thought the girl was the teacher. They said she was the teacher, and I found out she was only there longer than me. Then the girl that took her place, she was the teacher. And for the director to be so grand and so proper, why didn't she have qualified teachers?

It was run very nice, I have to say that. But you get children in there that don't belong. We had a boy that had a problem. He belonged in a special school. And they keep them until they can get rid of them. You were like the referee sometimes. If he took a nap, you'd have to practically lay down beside him and hold him down. That's the bad thing about day care. People are thrown in there that shouldn't be in there. But I have to say the meals were nice, the children were kept cleaner by day care than their families. A couple of kids we would give baths to. Positively needed them.

I called in for St. Patrick's Day off. She told me that I couldn't do that, I could go home early. So I said, "Listen, I'm not coming in. I'm telling you I'm not coming in." And we got into a ridiculous thing like, "These people need their job, and you don't need your job." She had a very odd attitude. Young mothers that were just hanging outside smoking while we were minding their kids. It was nonsense. I was glad I tried it, but they were right. I think I was too old for it.

Mary believes that children grow up best in their own parents' care. They are better disciplined and "turn out better." For her, proof in her own family is that all her children graduated from high school, two are now firemen and one is a policeman.

Mary herself grew up as one of seven children. Her father was a fireman. Although they were poor, Mary says "I never thought we missed anything." She remembers that her grandmother, who lived right around the corner, helped out by feeding everyone in the family a big meal every lunchtime. Mary's mother, in turn, took care of her grandchildren. She took one grandson in to live with her because his divorced mother, unlike the other daughters of the family, worked outside the home.

She worked until the day she had him and was back to work three weeks after, which was a big deal with the whole community. Even her divorce was something that we never mentioned. Never. My father never mentioned that divorce in the house.

Mary's mother had 21 grandchildren, and "there was always some child hanging around. There was a crib in her room as long as I can remember. When I got married, in the bridal pictures, there's a crib in the background."

Now Mary herself is a grandmother, but times have changed. Two of her sons have children, and their wives plan to work outside the home. One daughter-in-law, Stephanie, "had a very good job" before she married and had a baby. She now goes part-time to nursing school at night while her husband cares for their son. "And if they ever get stuck," Mary assured me, "we're right here." Since two of the O'Malley sons live in the same apartment house right around the corner, the wives also use each other for fill-in babysitting. "Very rarely do they have any problem," said Mary, "but the family's always here."

The other daughter-in-law, Cheryl, left her job as a secretary for a local firm when her first son, Danny, was born. When Danny was three, she returned to work at her old job and left him with Mary, who had at that point had just ended her brief stay at the day care center. When Cheryl's second son, Frank, was born, she went back to work sooner, partly because she was able to arrange to work only Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays during the summer when Danny is on vacation from school. During the summer months Mary takes Danny to her bungalow at the shore, and Cheryl joins them for four-day weekends. To Mary's disappointment, Cheryl has put the younger boy, Frank, with another babysitter.

Mary could only guess why Cheryl and her husband didn't ask her to take care of both children because she has never confronted them for their reasons, but she thought she knew the answer.

> They couldn't afford to pay me what the others were paying me, I'm sure. I think that's what bothered them. But I wouldn't have taken the money. They never asked me.

Cheryl and her husband pay their babysitter $60 a week, which includes food, for full-time care.

Mary described Cheryl's babysitter, Anna, in almost awesome terms. She takes care of about ten children and charges whether they come or not. Since this was the only person in East Urban that I'd heard of who was taking care of so large a group as to be illegal, and since her terms were more rigid than anyone else's supplying unregulated care that I had talked to, I was eager to learn more about Anna.

When I said I'd like to talk to Anna, Mary quickly said that would be impossible because she would be afraid of penalties for running an illegal operation, but Mary readily offered to call Cheryl at her office so that we could talk to her about Anna. After Mary reached Cheryl and handed me the telephone, I found it awkward to start the interview. Cheryl seemed to me to be a little resentful of being put on the spot in this way by her mother-in-law and repeated what Mary had said about not wanting to give me the babysitter's number or whereabouts. But she agreed to answer some of my questions.

Cheryl said she has known Anna for about ten years, dating back to the time when they lived in the same building and Anna began her babysitting business with two or three chidren. By expanding her business, Anna was able to buy a house and to renovate it so that two rooms are used as children's playrooms.

When Cheryl decided to return to work when Frank was a toddler, she made an appointment to visit Anna. Cheryl liked what she saw and put Frank's name on the waiting list. She had to wait only two months, although the wait is usually a year. Anna takes care of "about ten" children and only has free places when a child "graduates," usually to parochial school kindergarten. She likes to be able to care for children continuously from infancy until they enter school.

"I love her," said Cheryl. "She's like a grandmother. When you walk in, you smell something she's cooking in the kitchen. She has a nice yard. She loves the children like they were her own grandchildren. It's not like a school." When I asked Cheryl how she would compare this with center-based care, she said that this was better because centers have a "colder atmosphere and more people." In contrast to centers, she sees Anna's care (even with one caregiver for ten children) as "one- to-one." As an example of the kind of care she likes, Cheryl described how Anna gives each child a birthday party.

I asked Cheryl how she knows that Anna is a good babysitter. "Anybody who knows her says there's no bad thing. It's just like Frank is with family," Cheryl said. "When he leaves, he hugs and kisses Anna." Cheryl added that her son's behavior had improved since he started staying with Anna. "When I first brought my son to her, he was a little brat. Now he's fine. And the only punishment she uses is to stand them in the corner for being fresh. My son loves her." I asked how Anna could manage to care for ten little children at once, and Cheryl laughed. "My husband swears she drugs them," she said admiringly.

After I finished talking to Cheryl, I asked Mary if she ever considered taking a large group of children. "Oh, never," she answered emphatically. "I don't know how Anna does it. She trains the children. She gets them off the bottle and everything. She's amazing. She has two rooms downstairs in the house. They're just playrooms, and the children have to bring their own sleeping bags. But she's one in a million. In the summer she hires someone so they can go out in the yard. They don't go out in the winter at all. They watch TV. They learn things."

Halfway through our interview we were interrupted by the arrival of Mary's grandson, Danny, home from first grade in his parochial school uniform. Mary usually walks him to her house, but on the day of the interview someone had given him a ride. When I asked Danny about school, Mary interjected, "He got first honors twice now. Did you get your report card this week yet?" she asked, obviously ready to show it to me. Danny said that report cards would be given out on Wednesday and then went into the living room, where he settled down near the sleeping baby to watch television.

About a half hour later we were interrupted by another visitor, a woman Mary's age who entered without knocking. This was Danny's other grandmother, Cheryl's mother, Dorothy, who lives in the same apartment building as her daughter. She has a part-time job but is also a babysitter. Every weekday she picks Danny up from Mary's house after school. From there they go to pick up another child at his school so that Dorothy can care for both children together. One is Danny, the other is a boy she takes care of as a paid babysitter. (I did not learn whether she was also paid for her regular after-school care of Danny.)

The two grandmothers, who have known each other for years, chatted for a few minutes in the kitchen. Mary, who had by this time become interested herself in the child care questions I'd been asking, asked Dorothy how she had managed to hold a job and to care for her son as a young mother. Dorothy explained that she had worked for a local construction company where she could take her son with her to the office and where there was plenty of play space in an adjoining garage for him to run around.

Our interview ended soon after the mother whose baby boy Mary was taking care of arrived to pick him up, bringing along two older children whom she had just picked up from school. When she heard that I had been interviewing Mary about child care, she told me that she is "very fussy" about who babysits for her. She had spotted Mary picking up a child from school and asked around to find out who she was.

By this time Mary's own two children who live at home had arrived and were sprawled in front of the television set, along with the two visiting schoolchildren. I was surprised to realize we had now accumulated three adults, two children, two teenagers, and a baby in the tiny living room, but everyone appeared to be relaxed and to accept this as routine. Perhaps in this household, eight is minimal.

After the baby's mother had collected all three of her children and left and I had made preparations to leave myself, Mary became reflective. She said, "It's different now with my mother gone. Now I just have so much free time. I'm bored sometimes. When this mother asked me to babysit, I swore I wasn't going to do it. But as soon as I did, I liked it again." She paused, leaned back in her chair, and appeared to think over her alternatives at this point in her life. She leaned forward, putting her elbows on the table, and smiled broadly. "You know, I'd like a little granddaughter. *That's* what I'd like."

* * * * *

Mary's story illustrates many of the factors that determine child care choices for those who are Born and Raised in East Urban. Over the past fifty years, over the course of her lifetime, dramatic changes have occurred in child care, employment, housing, and family life, but at the same time old traditional community attitudes toward home, work, family, and children persist and act as a conservative counter-balance to new forces.

Child Care

With each generation Mary's family has changed its child care arrangements. Mary's mother cared for her seven children full-time and never took a job outside the home. Her mother shared the work by feeding the whole family a big mid-day meal every day during the children's noon recess from Catholic school. When Mary's oldest sister, who was employed, went back to work soon after her son was born, the neighborhood was scandalized. Mary's mother raised her grandson, who was not that much younger than her own youngest children. Because the family was large and the children were born over a long time span, an extra child could be integrated into the household without too much disruption. When women routinely cook for ten, adding another child or two to the table is not that much of a problem. Child care was shared work between generations but always within the maternal family.

Mary's own child care followed a different pattern. She stayed at home to care for her children full-time when they were preschool age, but after the youngest had entered school, she began to care for other people's children as well as her own. Her daughters sometimes shared in this work. When Mary's children married and had children of their own, Mary also took care of her grandchildren, but mainly on a part-time basis. Care of children was still shared across generations but was no longer confined to family members only.

The next generation follows still another pattern. Because Mary's daughters-in-law are unable to take care of their children full-time because of job commitments, they use a variety of arrangements to take care of the children. One family shares child care between husband and wife and uses other nearby relatives to fill-in. The other family used grandmother care for their son's preschool years and now uses both his grandmothers to care for him after school. They hired a babysitter outside the family to care for their younger son when he reached toddler age. This is the first time a member of Mary's family has used an outsider for child care, and she suspects that the reason is that Cheryl and her husband can't afford to pay the fee that Mary now charges other parents. Now that babysitting has become a form of employment, choices of child care may be determined by how much it costs.

This newest generation of mothers still uses family members to care for infants and toddlers but is beginning to rely on outsiders to care for their preschool children. Although these generational changes show a movement away from care within the family to care for and by outsiders, the model for child care is still the family. Mary is proud of the fact that her relationship with the Lorings was "like family." One of the Loring daughters was even included in one of the most important family rituals--a wedding. Now that the Lorings have moved, they still plan to stay in touch with the O'Malleys.

The Lorings were Mary's employers but they were also bound by emotional ties. Mary manages this duality of treating a business arrangement as though it were a family relationship by maintaining an ambivalent attitude toward her earnings. Although she says that she would work for the Lorings "for nothing," this may just be a way of saying that she prefers to think of her relationship in terms of nurturing family affection rather than working for income. She prefers the Lorings' paternalistic method of periodically granting raises to a negotiating process between employer and employee, and she values the gifts she receives in addition to her monetary pay.

Mary's daughter-in-law, Cheryl, also seeks a family relationship with her professional babysitter, Anna. Cheryl says she and her son Danny love Anna "like a grandmother" and that Anna in turn "loves the children like they were her own grandchildren." Even though Anna takes care of "about ten" children, Cheryl sees this as a "one-to-one" relationship. Perhaps because of past generations of large families, Cheryl sees Anna's caring for ten in her own house and yard with the smell of cooking wafting from her kitchen as a continuation of idealized family bonds.

By contrast, Cheryl views professional center-based care as "colder," that is, lacking emotional ties. One of her reasons for liking Anna's program is that "it's not like a school." Cheryl, in describing why she liked Anna's program, did not mention early learning or socialization. Instead, she repeatedly emphasized the personal, rather than the professional, values.

Since mother-daughter bonds are especially strong (in contrast to ties with Cheryl, who is a daughter-in-law), it may be that when Mary's daughters have children, they will leave the children with Mary full-time. Mary seems disappointed that Cheryl has chosen a babysitter from outside the family, but what she really wants to take care of is a granddaughter. It seems that Mary, who has recently lost the daily companionship of her mother, would like to fill the loneliness of that gap by caring for yet another relative from the newest generation.

Employment

Child care in Mary's family has been closely linked to employment, and employment patterns, like those of child care, have changed over three generations. Mary's parents were able to bring up seven children on the single income of Mary's father's work as a fireman. Mary's mother took it for granted that her work would be within the home unless, for some reason, she lost her husband's financial support. Her job was to take responsibility for the care for her husband, her children, her parents, and her grandchildren as well as the housework.

Although Mary's husband works at two full-time jobs, she felt that once her youngest child was in school, she should work to help to support her family. Mary considers her income necessary to meet the children's expenses, particularly those which might be considered "marginal" but are important to Mary as things she feels her children deserve--parochial schooling, prom clothes, and bridal showers.

Mary has some record of employment outside the home. She worked as a telephone operator before her children were born, and has since held, for short periods, jobs with the county, in a day care center, and for the telephone company. But Mary appears to prefer her babysitting job because it also allows her to fulfill her traditional responsibilities for housework and caring for her mother, husband, children, and grandchildren.

Mary's attitude toward her babysitting job reflects her ambivalence toward employment. Not only does she choose work that will allow her to continue to fulfill her familial duties, but her work entails further nurturance of other people's children. In her relationship with her employers, the Lorings, Mary is proud of the fact that she never talked money. She likes to think of herself and the children she cares for as "family" so that the payment is not the main object. This attitude of babysitting as an extension of family duties carries over into issues of legality, so that Mary takes it for granted that her pay from babysitting should not be subject to taxes. To Mary, what she receives for babysitting, either from within the family or without, is like the traditional "egg money" of farm women--cash earned on the side by wives who then have exclusive control over how it is spent.

It pleases her to be able to work for families who have the ability to pay what she considers a fair fee. At the same time she realizes that most jobs outside the home pay more than she is able to earn from babysitting. She still thinks of $10,000 a year as a good salary and finds it hard to imagine herself earning the salaries that women, such as her daughter, are now able to earn.

Mary also lacks confidence to take other employment than child care. She knows she's a good babysitter but thinks of herself, at 51, as too old to begin any new kind of work. Her attempt to return to her old job, working for the telephone company, was thwarted by her husband's opposition. Although Mary thinks about other work, it seems likely that she will stay in child care, particularly if she can combine this with taking care of her daughters' children.

Two of Mary's daughters-in-law are mothers. Stephanie is married to a fireman and Cheryl to a detective in the police department. Both families plan on having both mother and father in outside employment. Stephanie is preparing for a career in nursing by going to school at night and Cheryl has a job as a secretary. Although, unlike Mary and her mother, these young mothers are planning to work full-time, their job choices reflect dual commitments toward mothering and earning income.

Nursing, a nurturing profession, can be studied and practiced on schedules flexible enough to enable husband and wife to share in child caring. Cheryl's job is a local one, so that she works close to home and has been able to arrange with her long-time boss for time off in the summer to care for her children during school vacations.

Employment over three generations has changed from a husband supporting a family on a single income, to a husband who holds two full-time jobs and is helped by his wife's part-time work at home, to new fathers who count on their wives' full-time out-of- home employment to support their families. The women, although they have moved into paid work, have chosen jobs that reflect their traditional values of helping others and of work within the household.

Housing

Houses on Mary's block were built to be inexpensive. They are smaller than most in East Urban and lack central heating. When Mary's parents were young, they bought their house for $750, an amount so high for them that they had to find a private mortgage arrangement since no bank would grant a mortgage for such low property value. Mary's mother paid $500 for the house that Mary and her husband now own. By 1970 houses had increased tenfold in price, but were still affordable by Born and Raised families. That year a young father who had grown up on the block paid a record price, $12,000 (still with no bank mortgage), for the corner house, the largest on the block and the one with central heating and a basement.

Long-time block residents are now being replaced by young professional couples who pay up to $150,000 for a house. Mary's children's generation cannot afford to buy a house on the block where they grew up. But, of course, they may not want to. Though newcomers may find the block houses quaintly "old fashioned," young adults who grew up on the block in large families cramped into small spaces may see these same houses as uncomfortably "old fashioned."

Where the block used to be teeming with children from large Catholic families, there are now few. A former block resident describes how it used to be. "It was small, one-family rowhouses, and everybody knew everybody, and half of them were related to each other. You were never alone. Everybody kind of looked out for everybody's kids." Because there was practically no through traffic, children could in times past play in the street as a relatively safe space under adult supervision. When children's mothers were away, other neighbors who were often relatives took responsibility.

Although the younger generation is moving away from their parents, in Mary's family they still live nearby. Two of Mary's son's families live in the same apartment house around the corner along with other relatives, so that relatives are still close at hand for babysitting. But arrangements are no longer informal; they must be set ahead of time.

Child care is further complicated by the architecture of apartment houses. Living space is physically removed from children's outdoor play space, and elevators are further barriers. The old block with its unlocked front doors opening directly onto the street was much more amenable to communal child care.

Traditions of Child Rearing

In the O'Malley family, as in other East Urban Born and Raised families, what was good enough for your parents should be good enough for you. They do not aspire, in contrast to the middle class, to upward mobility. Mary says with satisfaction, "My father was a fireman, my three brothers are firemen, and now I have two firemen. I guess we're just East Urban people." Her implication is that the O'Malleys are people who "know their place" and are comfortable with it.

In Mary's view, families know best how to bring up their children. She does not talk about early learning before parochial school kindergarten and did not send her children to preschool. In her babysitting job Mary stresses family rather than educational values. Her ideal is to treat the children in her care as she would her own children, to keep them safe by careful supervision and to keep them healthy by daily trips to the park, by cleanliness, and by generous feeding.

When Mary took a job in the day care center, she found that her traditions of child care differed from those of her professionally-trained director. She thought the "babies" she cared for were too young for the weekly "projects" she was required to devise. To Mary, going for a daily walk was enough, as long as there was "no trouble." Mary also disliked being told to do things in ways that seemed to violate her sense of how they should be done. The professional standards seemed to her "ridiculous," a way of making the work more complicated than it needed to be.

Mary and Cheryl both admire Anna, the babysitter, for her traditional ways with children--punishing by standing in the corner and rewarding with hugs and kisses. Mary makes the point that Anna "trains" the children. The O'Malleys believe that

children should be deferential to adults, not "fresh." More middle class goals for child rearing such as creativity and independence are not mentioned.

When Mary talks about learning, it is in terms of learning from television or bringing home a good report card. The goal of education in this family is to graduate from high school in order to get a decent-paying job.

Class and Ethnicity

Mary lives on a block built for railroad and factory workers that is still characterized as working class. Its residents typically take blue collar jobs after completing high school, and Mary's husband falls into this pattern. Being "poor," in Mary's view, does not mean a family "missed anything."

Mary's first babysitting job came from a mother who taught school, and her most successful stint of babysitting, with the Lorings, was for high income professional parents. She has also worked for other professional couples, and her name is now passed from one to another. When Mary says, "It's nicer if you kind of know the people," she is referring to this network of middle class parents.

By contrast, the Indian family, Mary says, "were the only strange people I had." It seems likely, although she did not say so outright, that Mary was prejudiced against the Indians because of their ethnicity. They also represented an alien culture. Her dealings with the family appear to be fraught with cross-cultural misunderstandings.

Where the Lorings were valued as family and terms of employment were not discussed, the Indian father was told, "What do you think this is? It's a job." Mary's work for middle class families, whose high earnings enable them to pay regularly and in full, was markedly different from her work for the lower-earning Indian family who expected her to charge only her "share" of the wife's earnings.

When Mary went to work at the day care center, she found she resented being treated as an inferior by the professional director, "so grand and so proper." The director's admonition that "tables are made for glasses" could be viewed as a class-based reproach. When the director told Mary to "clean and polish," Mary may have felt that was beneath her. She resented the class distinctions represented by the professional standards of the center. It only added to her hostility that the classroom

teachers lacked the credentials that would at least have provided them with a sanctioned status for assuming authority.

If Mary was unable to identify with the professional staff at the center, she did not identify herself with the center parents either. Behind Mary's description of "young mothers that were just hanging outside smoking while we were minding their kids," lies disapproval of unmarried teenagers, of welfare mothers, and of black and Hispanic poor. The ways of these parents are not Mary's ways. Some of their children do not even meet her standards of cleanliness, to her a primary failing in proper child care.

Mary's unease came to a head when she, acting on Irish traditional solidarity, asked for St. Patrick's day off. The director, in denying her request, seemed to Mary to be putting the parents' jobs ahead of Mary's. When Mary, as a result, quit the center job, saying, "I think I was too old for it," she left a situation of class and ethnic conflict that she identified with new social patterns too difficult for her to accept.

Mary positions herself in providing a service to white professional parents as below the upper middle class but above the non-white working class. When asked to provide her service to those "below" her, as she was when caring for the Indian baby and working in the day care center, she is resentful and ends the arrangement.

Conclusions

It seems unlikely that this family will use licensed center- based care for their children. But it also seems clear that they will need some kind of child care because, in the new generation of young parents, both fathers and mothers choose to work due to long-term irreversible changes in community and national economic forces.

These young parents will, with their combined earnings, be ineligible for subsidized care. Even if they were eligible, they probably would not want to put their children in one of the three subsidized centers in town. Many Born and Raised parents know that subsidized centers in East Urban serve largely minority children of single mothers, and do not want to be associated with this category of parents. Although private centers serve largely white families, they are too expensive (at fees of $336 a month) for full-time care of preschoolers.

But there are other reasons that these young families are unlikely to use center-based care. Since their ideal of quality care is within the family, they prefer child care by a well-known neighbor (even though recognized as illegal) to center- based care. But, to a large extent, they have been forced to seek child care outside the family because of economic forces. In Cheryl's family, one grandmother works part-time and is available for child care only during after-school hours and the other grandmother's babysitting work has made fees too high even within the family.

Anna, Cheryl's babysitter, runs a child care operation that according to state regulations is both unlicensed and illegal. But even if Cheryl wanted licensed group family day care, there is none available in East Urban. Cheryl pays Anna fees that are less than she would have to pay her relative, Mary, to match the Lorings' payment. Yet the Lorings paid Mary much less than they would have had to pay a licensed private day care center for comparable care.

The young O'Malley family's earnings are too high to qualify for subsidized care, yet they are unable to benefit from other policies which have been designed to help working parents. Although Cheryl stayed home with her infants until they were toddler age before returning to work, she works for a small company with no paid parental leave policy, and consequently the family had no second income during that time. She was fortunate, however, to be able to return to her old job because she had built up a favorable work record, and this also helped her to work out an arrangement for part-time work without a reduction in salary.

Since Anna's operation is illegal, Cheryl does not claim a dependent care tax credit for her child care expenses in order to protect Anna from charges of illegal operation. She also might not report payments made to her mother for similar reasons. Although Mary's babysitting never runs over the legal limitation of five children at one time, even with the combined numbers of relative children plus outsider children, she does not pay taxes on her babysitting income. Therefore Cheryl would not want (under legislation that now requires parents to supply social security numbers of their caregivers) to claim a dependent care tax credit for payments made to her mother.

Mary doesn't know if the Lorings claimed a dependent care tax credit or if they received child care benefits from their employers, one of which is a large corporation. Considering their very high salaries, however, it is clear that even without these means of offsetting child care expenses, the Lorings could well afford Mary's services. They paid a lower proportion of their combined income for child care than Mary's own

children do, who use lower cost illegal care (where an illegally large group of children enables the caregiver to charge less). This would be true even if child care expenses were measured as a percentage of the mothers' incomes alone, rather than of the combined household earnings. (Most working mothers figure what they can afford to pay for child care against their own paychecks, not as a percentage of the combined household income.)[6]

Mrs. Loring, who holds an executive job for a large corporation, was able to purchase safe, conscientiously provided care for her three children at a relatively low price. She also had care which met her job's requirements of travel and extended hours. When her children were sick, she had someone to care for them so that she did not have to take time off from work. She was able to perform as a corporation executive because of the child care available to her. Yet her corporation did not directly support Mary's work. It was Mary's low fees and flexible hours which indirectly supported the corporation.

Cheryl's employer, on the other hand, is a small businessman who offers Cheryl part-time work at no reduction in salary to accommodate her child care needs. In effect, he subsidizes the time during summer school vacations that she spends with her children. (However, without these arrangements Cheryl, a highly valued employee, would not have returned to her job after the birth of her second child.)

Mary and Anna, because they don't report their babysitting incomes as taxable, are unable to gain social security benefits, and this might be particularly important to Anna as a single woman. (On the other hand, by running so large an operation for non-taxable income, Anna has been able to earn enough to invest in real estate which might be her best insurance against retirement expenses.) Neither Mary nor Anna are subject to regulations of health and safety for the protection of the children they care for, and neither has professional training.

The babysitting that Mary provides satisfies the child care needs of her relatives and of the Lorings, who, through their long association with her, have become like family. Mary's care may not be professional but it is loving and reliable and it reinforces family and local community values. To this extent, child care providers like Mary O'Malley form an essential part of our child care system.

But there are also problems in Mary's story. We learn that Cheryl has turned to illegal care, that the Indian family has been turned away, that only professional career families can afford Mary's services. As a result child care in East Urban today is no

longer provided solely within the family or between friends; questions of negotiating the terms of child care between strangers undermine what was once a self-sufficient system. Mary's story raises issues of social and economic change that I found borne out again and again in my interviews with East Urbanites.

Born and Raised Parents and Their Child Care

When I had identified the various groups in East Urban, I found that members of my target group for study, white working class of ethnic heritage, were clustered in distinctive neighborhoods and referred to themselves as Born and Raised. These were mainly descendants of Italian and Irish immigrants who lived in the same neighborhoods where they were born. Mostly Catholic, their families were smaller than those of previous generations, but many still had large family networks of nearby relatives. These older neighborhood enclaves of the Born and Raised provided families with surroundings of close friends and relatives.

My problem then became how to find members of the Born and Raised group who would agree to be interviewed about child care. I soon found that little social interaction exists between groups in East Urban and that Born and Raised families stick to themselves. They act as a society within a society. Most social relations are with other members of their families. They also have a mistrust of outsiders prying into their affairs. What they do, they consider to be their own business and no one else's. Community and family provide guides to behavior, not institutional research, and they had no incentive to cooperate in an academic study.

Another problem with gaining access to Born and Raised informants was that the terms in which I was defining my study were not those that Born and Raised families would ordinarily use in describing themselves. They do not see themselves as parents who depend on "day care." In fact, they do not even use this term as it is commonly used by professionals to apply to a wide variety of programs, including family day care. In Born and Raised terms, child care falls into two categories--care by "babysitters" or in the "day cares," which is what day care centers are called. Nor do Born and Raised mothers readily identify themselves as "working mothers," because the idea of women in paid work is at variance with a family ideal of the wife as stay-at-home mother and the husband whose earnings support the family. Working wives were ambivalent about their employment and discussions on the subject were not easy for them. Often, after I had explained the nature of my project, Born and Raised women would say they knew of no one who would "fit." Their attitude was, if it's a study about working mothers and day care, then it's not about us.

By perserverance I was able eventually to find 14 Born and Raised parents who agreed to be interviewed about child care. Some of these I met in the outer offices of

city administrators. These women, married to blue collar workers, held jobs as secretaries, clerks and receptionists and were somewhat experienced in dealing with the general public. I increasingly realized that the "true" Born and Raised families--those most conservative in preserving past values--were inaccessible to my prying eyes. In the main, parents I talked to tended to be the ones who were most accessible to outsiders, either through the nature of their work or because they had adopted an independent stance against traditional family patterns. They were the ones who were adapting to changes from the traditional models of family life and were willing to discuss what that change entailed.

Tommy: "Yuppified Italian"

Tommy was not yet a parent, but he was engaged and had definite opinions about his "very heavy Italian" family life, and he was able to articulate his viewpoint more than most other Born and Raised parents I interviewed. I heard about Tommy when I went to the weekly East Urban newspaper offices to ask local reporters if they knew any Born and Raised parents. They suggested Tommy, who worked in the newspaper's advertising office, as the archetypical Born and Raised spokesman. The reporters assured me that Tommy would be willing to be interviewed--that, in fact, he enjoyed talking about his Italian heritage. This proved to be the case.

As a Born and Raised East Urbanite who has risen from a blue collar background to a white collar job (although he continues to work nights as a cook in a delicatessen), Tommy has spanned two economic groups. He has capitalized on his dual status by writing occasional feature articles for the paper in which he reports as an expert on "native" East Urban customs--what he calls "fluffy articles," on such subjects as local nicknames and Italian food.

In his position as a bridge between his professional colleagues and his working class friends and relatives, Tommy is reflective and articulate about the differences between the two groups. He began our interview, for example, by explaining, "I was born and raised in downtown East Urban where we 'berl' water, use 'tinferl,' and go to the 'terlet.'" This had the ring of an old joke, and I had the impression that although Tommy's observations were acute, they were perhaps exaggerated in the service of his self-proclaimed role as a "colorful" Born and Raised spokesman. He indicated repeatedly that he was not afraid to say what he thinks regardless of what others might consider indiscreet.

Tommy is a third-generation East Urban Italian. His father was a teamster whose job was loading trucks and his mother was a housewife who stayed at home to care for Tommy and his brother. This is the traditional family pattern. Tommy, however, has planned a different family life. His fiancee is planning to combine motherhood with a job, even though, as Tommy is quick to assure me, they could "live nice" on his earnings alone. They plan to use the older generation of maternal relatives for child care--either the children's maternal grandmother or a maternal aunt who is already watching a grandchild of her own. Tommy explained why.

> It's just that we do everything within the family unit. We're heavily family-oriented. Our whole life is around the family. In America, people don't really have that. It's nothing for an American child to grow up and move to California while their family is in East Urban. For us, it's a travesty. You have to be near your family. Holidays, everything is around the family. There's no such thing as going out with your wife on New Year's for dinner alone. It has to be with ten thousand people.

Tommy was eager to explain to me why family life was central to his group and how traditions of child rearing were important for the continuity of a value system. He can count on relatives for this but not on strangers.

> My particular group that I come from are very conservative, yuppified Italians, if you want to look at it that way, who still believe in the family. If it was good enough for Grandma and good for Mama, it's good for me. I believe that if the child grows up like me and my mother and my mother's mother and my father's father, they're going to be good no matter what. I grew up okay, they'll grow up okay. The child has the same potential I had under the same system.
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> I would rather spend the same amount of money with relatives than with the day care system. I can trust them. I can sleep easier knowing the child is with a relative than with strangers. Discipline is, you get hit if you do something wrong. If you do something good, you get praised. It's the basic, old-fashioned, what's right is right, what's wrong is wrong. Walk the straight and narrow.

Tommy estimates that he's related to about one hundred people in East Urban but he says that none of them use day care centers. He did not realize that it was possible for children younger than three to be enrolled in centers. When I explained that even infants can be cared for in center-based programs, he reacted dramatically, "Get out! Really? That's retarded! That's disgusting! I think that's horrible! Why have a

baby?" When I pointed out that some working parents required center-based infant care, Tommy conceded that he would not "look down on a welfare mother who had to support her kids" if *she* put her baby in an infant program. "People have to do what they have to do," he said, but it was clear that Tommy does not plan to be one of them.

Even though Tommy recognizes himself as in transition from his working-class parents to a white collar job, a "yuppified Italian", he takes pride in his ethnic heritage and makes a point of separating himself from the "American" way. He would not, for example, want to move away from the neighborhood of his birth. It is in the home community that Italian culture is transmitted.

Child rearing is the vehicle for passing this culture from one generation to the next. The system that produced the previous generation should be good enough for the next. Standards of right and wrong are reinforced by reward and punishment. Tommy wants his future children to "walk the straight and narrow," for to depart from these time-worn paths of authoritative discipline would be to risk failure.

Tommy sees the "old fashioned" value system as what has enabled East Urban's immigrants to gain economic security. But their status is not so firm that they can ignore a real possibility of falling into poverty. Day care centers, in Tommy's view, are for children whose parents have failed--failed in their family relationships, as "American" parents, or failed within the economic system, as "welfare" parents.

Tommy's acceptance of his fiancee's decision to take a job is a departure from his family's tradition, but his attitude toward child care is firmly rooted in the past. Tommy is comfortable with the idea that his wife will work only because he knows that his children can be cared for by their maternal relatives. With his large family living nearby there is no need to seek care from strangers, either with babysitters or in the day cares.

Suzanne: "Ideal" Child Care

Tommy had definite opinions about child care, but he was not yet a parent. Suzanne, a Born and Raised working mother, has had nine years of combining employment with child care. She is a secretary-receptionist in a small office dealing with urban renewal where I had gone seeking census tables. When she offered to help me photocopy some charts I needed, I took the opportunity to ask her about child care in her own family.

Suzanne reluctantly agreed to be taped, probably because she saw the project as something that interested her boss. If she had anticipated that I would ask her so many personal questions she might have refused altogether. The interview was difficult because Suzanne offered no information beyond what I elicited. She was guarded and circumspect in her answers and appeared to be protecting her family. She presented a problem-free picture of child care arrangements that were made without stress and to everybody's satisfaction.

Suzanne and her husband have two children, a boy who is 12 and a girl nine. Before the children were born, Suzanne worked full-time, but after the birth of her son she stayed at home until he was three before returning to work part-time. With the birth of her second child she stayed at home only nine months before returning to part-time work. Child care has been provided by her mother, who lived nearby, and took care of the children in her home, where Suzanne dropped them off by car every day. If they were sick, the grandmother would come to Suzanne's house to care for the children. Since both sets of grandparents lived in Suzanne's neighborhood, she always had backup arrangements.

Suzanne says of her child care, "It's ideal, you know. You can trust family." She says that although the grandmother was a "little bit more liberal" in child rearing than Suzanne might have wanted, there were no major disagreements because grandmother care "isn't that big of an impact." In other words, it fits right into family-accepted norms for children's behavior. When I asked if the grandmother were paid, Suzanne said no, and explained, "We're a close family. We help each other." In her neighborhood, Suzanne said, all young children go to their grandmothers' homes for babysitting.

As they approached school age Suzanne began to worry that the children needed a "school-type atmosphere" and to "get used to working with groups." She put the children in Head Start and served on its board but was concerned that "they should have been doing less play and more prep toward education." When the children reached kindergarten age, Suzanne sent them to St. Margaret's, the parochial school of her family parish. Although Suzanne doesn't consider herself "particularly religious," she wants them to receive the sacraments and have some exposure to religious education. She and her husband also consider parochial schools better than public schools at getting students into college.

Suzanne now works full-time. Since the grandmother lives only two blocks from the parish school, she can pick up the children and provide after-school care. Suzanne's husband recently decided that their son, now 12, was old enough for his own latchkey. He has begun to feel too "restricted" with his grandmother and wants to be with his own toys and computer games after school. The younger sister still stays with her grandmother. During the summer months both children are at home without adult supervision. They have only one neighbor who can help them if they need it because the others are working. But of course Suzanne could easily arrange to come home quickly from her East Urban office should the children summon her.

For Born and Raised working mothers the maternal grandmother is often the most acceptable child care provider except for parents. Since child care is primarily the mother's responsibility, she counts on her mother to provide the same child rearing that she herself received. Born and Raised working mothers want their children's upbringing to be identical to their own (unlike many of their middle class counterparts who disapprove, in retrospect, of their parents' ways). Suzanne reports only one area of disagreement--her mother was a "little bit more liberal," which can likely to attributed to affectionate indulgence. In general, their views of child rearing were consonant. Suzanne stayed at home with her oldest child for three years, but when her second child was born she felt confident enough about her child care to return to work after only nine months.

The grandmother's child care was lacking in one important respect, however. When Suzanne's oldest child reached pre-school age she decided he needed a group experience as preparation for school. Suzanne is ambitious for her children's educational success, pays their Catholic school tuition, and expects them to go to college. For the important task of school preparation, grandmother's care is not enough. Suzanne used Head Start as a preschool, even serving on its board.

Another potential problem is Suzanne's reliance on latchkey care. Suzanne's son is no longer content to stay with his grandmother and now goes home by himself. The children are also left alone during the summer when the grandmother is away. Although the family lives in a "nice" part of town, neighbors who were once available as adults who could "keep an eye" on Suzanne's children are now at work themselves. Even Suzanne's "ideal" child care has its limitations.

Tina and Alicia: Turning to Center-based Care

Another mother, Tina, told a different kind of story that showed what can happen when grandmothers become unavailable for child care. I had asked the director of a publicly-funded day care center for the names of any Born and Raised parents whose children were in the center. She suggested I talk to Tina. When I telephoned Tina, she rather reluctantly agreed to meet me and suggested that I might want to talk to her sister, Alicia, as well. I suspected that Tina wanted company during the interview, and I agreed to meet Tina at Alicia's apartment.

Alicia lives on a rather rundown street of East Urban's typical three-story row houses, now converted to floor-through apartments. Looking for the house number I had been given, I spotted a woman standing on her front stoop scanning the street. Sure enough, she was standing at the right number, but she gave me no sign of recognition. Correctly guessing this was Alicia, but feeling awkward, I introduced myself and asked if she were expecting me. "No," she said, "I am looking for my sister." Once again I was struck by how uneasy these women are with strangers.

When Tina finally arrived, and we were all settled around Alicia's kitchen table over cups of coffee, everyone relaxed. Once Tina began her story, she talked easily and with frankness. Tina has two children, Antony, seven, and Frank, three. Her husband works as a security guard. Tina worked as a clerk for a large corporation in the City until Antony was born. Although she would have liked to have stayed home with the baby, the family depended upon her income.

Tina would have preferred to have her mother care for Antony, but her health was so frail that she didn't want to burden her with the care of an infant. Instead, she looked for someone who might come to her house as a babysitter, but she found this to be too expensive. She then tried to find someone in her neighborhood, but the only woman who was willing to do babysitting had four young children of her own, and Tina did not want to entrust her with an additional infant. Finally, Tina turned to her ailing mother because she saw no other solution. Tina took Antony to her mother's house every day and paid her for child care.

When Antony was three, his grandmother's health had deteriorated to the point where she could no longer care for him. Tina's husband works night shifts and might have been able to take on some of the daytime child care except that his schedule was

irregular. With her only relative who was available for child care incapacitated and with no suitable neighbors, Tina had to look to strangers for child care.

> I had heard of day cares, but I never took an interest in them, and I guess I always thought that I'd have my mother and father with me to watch the kids. I would hear a lot from women at work about their kids in day cares. I'd see them in the morning, rushing in saying, "Oh, by the time I dropped my kids off--" and, "I had trouble with the day care." And I said, "I hope I don't have to do that. I hope I always have my mother and father around to watch the kids." But it doesn't always work that way.

Tina looked around for a day care center. She first put Antony in a licensed private center in a nearby town but took him out after only four days.

> It looked more just like a babysitting service. There were all these kids in one room, the t.v. going all day, broken toys. I'd stay awhile and check everything out. Every day I'd pick him up, and he'd cry and tell me he didn't like it there. If I had wanted my son to watch TV, I would have kept him home. He'd tell me, "we watched cartoons." He always complained to me that the toys were all broken, and they couldn't play with them.

Tina remembered that she had often passed a sign right in her own neighborhood for a publicly-funded day care center. Although she knew no one who had put their children there, she went in for an interview and was impressed when she toured the program.

> It looked like a day care. Each group was divided into age groups, and you could see the activities. She showed me the planning book. The teachers had their own groups of kids. Not like the other one that had them all mixed together. I liked what I saw. And I felt comfortable with it.

Tina waited one month on the waiting list before Antony was admitted. Because the center was subsidized, her fees were $35 a week compared to the $40 charged by the other private center where she had first gone.

When Antony was four, Tina had her second baby, Frank. Because the grandmother was now absolutely too infirm to stay with the baby, Tina stayed home from work for three months. When she returned to work, she tried to put Frank in the same day care center as Antony. Although the center had a small infant program,

there was no room for Frank. Instead, Tina paid $80 a week for care in another private East Urban day care center. Tina waited until Frank was two before securing a place for him in the subsidized center. By this time, Antony had entered Catholic school and attended its after-school program.

Tina now had her child care arrangements in place, but she ran into problems at work. Transferred to a new section, she found her schedule was changed, and she was asked to start work at 8:30 in the morning. She found it impossible to drop both children off and arrive at her office in the City on time. She asked if she could make up the time during her lunch hour, but the company turned down her request, and she was forced to quit her job after 14 years of work.

> They're my kids, and I have the first obligation to get them off to school. I tried to explain to them that I was willing to work. I didn't want to quit. I couldn't afford to quit. I just needed that extra half an hour which I was willing to give up a half hour lunch for. But they wouldn't.

Tina could not find another comparable job and has had to take a job in East Urban as a drugstore cashier, working part-time, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., at $4.25 an hour. Her center fees have been reduced to $24 per week. "We make just enough so we can make it through the month, pay our bills, and buy a little groceries," says Tina, but she will have to find full-time work by the start of the next school year in order to afford Antony's school tuition.

Alicia, who is younger than Tina, has also had child care problems. When her daughter, Irene, was born, Alicia's husband was only sporadically employed and the family depended on her earnings. Since she was unable to use her ailing mother for child care, she turned to her mother-in-law, who lived next door and welcomed the payments Alicia made for child care. Alicia's mother-in-law took care of Irene for three years, during which she moved in with Alicia and her husband. Relations were strained, and when Alicia's working day was lengthened by one hour her mother-in-law refused to continue child care.

At that point, Alicia decided to use the same publicly funded day care center that her sister, Tina, had found. Soon after that she was laid off from her job. When her second child was born, she decided to drop out of the job market to stay at home rather than put the infant in a day care center. "I think that at a younger age they need the parent more, " she explained. "They need more care than the day cares could give them." Her husband, who works as a grinder in a propeller factory, now makes

"enough so we can scrimp by." As long as the family can make it on his salary, her husband wants her to stay at home.

As I was about to leave, Alicia told about a dream she had the night before. She dreamed that she had gone back to her old job and found that they had started a day care center. But she realized that her children had grown to adults and that it was too late for her. "Why do you think I dreamed that?" she asked me, and then, after a pause, answered her own question. "I guess because I was thinking about your coming."

Tina and Alicia are mothers who have had to work in order to support their families but whose traditional child support systems of family and neighbors have failed them. Tina first heard about day care centers from her co-workers. She assumed she would never need such arrangements, but, as she says, "it doesn't always work that way."

Even though she had no East Urban friends who used day care centers, she nevertheless had definite ideas about quality. The first center was judged immediately to be unacceptable on several counts. It was shoddy and had no program besides television. Interestingly, Tina saw this as "more just like a babysitting service." She had higher expectations from center-based care. When she toured the subsidized center, "it looked like a day care." By this, Tina meant that it was more school-like with age segregated groups and planned activities. Tina's expectations for day cares were that they be more like educational settings and less like home-based babysitting.

Tina's and Alicia's stories illustrate a family that is growing more accepting of center-based care. Tina was the first to venture into the neighborhood day care center when Antony was three and leaving his grandmother's care. When Tina's next child was born, she sought center-based care for her infant--a daring step for a Born and Raised mother. When Alicia's unsatisfactory child care arrangements with her mother-in-law broke down, she followed Tina's example and applied to the day care center for three-year-old Irene. Alicia, unlike Tina, however, will not use center-based care for an infant, and since she has no other alternative for her second child she has dropped out of the labor market as the only solution.

Michelle: Babysitters and Day Cares

Michelle was a different kind of mother from the other Born and Raised parents I interviewed. After growing up in a family of eight and with an abusive, alcoholic father, Michelle had established an independent life of her own. As a young teenager she had been hired as a live-in babysitter for a middle class East Urban family. Since the mother was a nursery school teacher, she probably applied her professional standards of child development to raising her own children, providing a model for Michelle. Because of this experience and her professional training as a nurse, Michelle had absorbed these values and made them her own. Unlike other Born and Raised women I met, Michelle is a strong feminist and expects her husband to share in household duties, including child care.

Michelle works as a practical nurse in a municipal clinic, and it was through her connections there that I met her. She lives in a floor-through apartment in a building that her husband remodelled. (He is a non-union plumber.) On the day of our interview the apartment appeared cozily cluttered, neither "picked up" for the occasion nor unduly messy. Michelle, dressed casually in shirt and pants, answered questions readily. During the interview three-month-old Annie napped in a mechanized swing seat. Edward, a first grader, was in public school.

When Edward was three and a half months old, Michelle's husband was out of work. Although Michelle would have liked to have stayed at home for a few more months with Edward, she was forced to return to full-time nursing. Neither grandmother was available for babysitting. Gentrification had forced Michelle's mother into another town, where she now holds a job, and Michelle's husband's parents had also moved away to be near their daughter and to babysit for her children.

Michelle knows all about day care centers and thinks they are fine for older children, but she prefers family day care for infants. Comfortable with strangers, she doesn't hesitate to seek babysitters beyond her immediate neighbors, but even so, she had difficulties. Edward had ten babysitters by the time of his first birthday. She says she had "no prospects for a babysitter" and "just grabbed at straws, word of mouth."

Part of the reason for such a high turnover in babysitters, Michelle admits, is because Edward was a difficult child to care for.

> I had a very active infant. It's very few and far between that you find sitters who are into that. Because they like children who want to sit. That's my experience. If you have an infant that would sit in a seat and they could clean their house and watch the soaps and do whatever they have to do, then it might last. But I had a very active infant. He's still a pain in the ass at six. He just took a lot of energy. They'd try to put him in a playpen, and that would last about a day. I would say, "Your best bet is to go out every nice day. If you have errands to run, I don't mind him going out." And they would just say, "I'm sorry, I can't sit anymore."

Michelle felt that, ironically, taking care of Edward caused her babysitters to abandon child care in favor of a "regular job." "Why sit for the kid for $3 an hour when for minimum wage you could get a job where you can sit down all day?"

The first successful arrangement, which lasted a year, was with the mother of a two-year-old who also cared for Edward in her home. According to Michelle, the babysitter was "loving and energetic" but her two-year-old was jealous and "spent the whole time pretty much beating Edward up." The following year, when Edward was two, Michelle left him with another woman who cared for three two-year-olds, one of them her own. Her child care was "excellent," but Michelle did not like the woman's husband and thought him "weird." He appeared depressed and "pretty catatonic." (But as far as she knew, he did not bother the children.)

By the end of that year, Michelle's husband had found a job and she was able to reduce her working hours to part time. She also felt Edward was old enough at three to be put in a day care center. Michelle knew she was eligible for publicly subsidized child care, so she chose a bilingual subsidized center located in a Spanish-speaking church. The center would only take Edward on a five-day-a-week basis but even so the fee was only $50 a week compared to the $75 she had been paying babysitters. She liked the people who ran the center but didn't like the space, which was in the church basement that repeatedly flooded due to plumbing problems.

When Edward was almost four, Michelle switched to another subsidized center in a newer building. She liked this second center. "It was great," she says, "It's clean, the teachers were nice, the food was okay. My biggest complaint about them is that they are great for three-year-olds, but for four-year-olds the program seems to have a dead end." Michelle feels the naps are too long for four-year-olds and blames this on the center's giving teachers time off during naps in compensation for the low pay they receive.

Michelle plans to return to part-time work. She thinks that six months at home with Annie is about right, and the family can make good use of a second income. Soon she will start all over again to look for another babysitter.

Michelle is not afraid to make child care arrangements beyond her immediate circle of relatives and neighbors. For her the issue is one of quality, judged by the principles of child development rather than of personal relationships. Her standards are high, and if she is not satisfied she finds someone else, even if that means constant changes in caregivers.

Since there is no licensed family day care in East Urban, Michelle had only her own perceptions to judge by. What she wanted for her active son was a caregiver who would channel his energy into interesting activities, such as going to the park or going on errands. Michelle disapproves of babysitters who encourage passivity in children. Her ideal care is "loving and energetic." When she located such women, however, there were other problems--a jealous child, a depressed husband.

Michelle apparently has no prejudices against the children in publicly subsidized day care centers. Her first choice was a center whose population is almost totally Hispanic and her second choice was the center with the largest black enrollment. Her criticisms are not of the kinds of families who use day care centers but of the facilities and the program. The first basement location she considered unsafe. The second center, in her opinion, has a program that is suitable for three-year-olds but not for fours. Again, her standards are for developmentally appropriate practice rather than family-based values.

Conclusions

In general, I found that Born and Raised parents in East Urban have traditionally assigned wives the role of staying at home to care for children and household, at least until the children are old enough to care for themselves in the teenage years, and assigned husbands the role of provider, even when economic necessity led to the husband having to work two jobs. This is still regarded as the most desirable pattern by this group. If mothers of young children are employed outside the home, it is usually because of economic necessity.

The first choice in day care arrangements for children in this group, particularly for infants and toddlers, is care by grandmothers, especially the maternal grandmother.

Families generally disapprove of leaving children with "strangers" as caregivers. Although subsidized center-based child care is available in East Urban and some of these families would be eligible, they associate "day cares" with minority children whose parents receive public assistance. Using day care centers is often viewed by Born and Raised parents as a social stigma (but this is not true of Head Start, which is seen as an educational rather than a welfare program).

To the extent that East Urban has remained a city where grandmothers are available to their grandchildren, where kinship networks still exist, and where well-known neighbors care for each other's children, child care arrangements can be met within these familiar boundaries. But Born and Raised families are embedded in an economic system that has resulted in family change. Old neighborhoods are broken up by gentrification. Relatives are scattering. More and more women are at work, even mothers of very young children.

In these stories of Tommy, Suzanne, Tina, Alicia, and Michelle we see parents who are grappling with these changes. The need for child care is increasing beyond what can be supplied by relatives and friends, and Born and Raised parents must turn to outsiders. Parents who implicitly trusted their family for proper and loving care must now find standards by which to judge outsider babysitters and day care centers run by professionals.

Informal and Unregulated Child Care in East Urban

When Born and Raised parents make child care arrangements with babysitters, they prefer, as we have seen, to use well-known and trusted neighbors. But, as we have also seen with the case of Mary O'Malley, babysitters from the Born and Raised group are less available to their relatives and friends as demands for their services increase, particularly when they care for children of professional career parents.

Part of my research plan was to interview women from the Born and Raised group who worked as family day care providers. I asked questions about how they decided to become caregivers, what their rates were and how fees were set, what their concerns were about the legality of their work, what their working conditions were like, what they believed were good child rearing practices, how caring for "outsider" children affected other members of their family; and I gathered what information I could about the quality of their care giving.

In one way Born and Raised babysitters were easier to interview than parents. Babysitters, at least, recognized themselves as pertinent to my study. Given the intent of my research, they readily supplied the details of their work. They suggested other babysitters I might interview. Born and Raised babysitters tended to be well established and widely known in their communities. They were proud of their work and had no trouble finding children to care for.

A major difficulty, however, was that some babysitters refused to be interviewed because their work was "off the books," that is, they did not report their income for taxation. They would not trust me, as an outside interviewer, not to report them to authorities for tax evasion.

They were less concerned about their legal status in terms of regulation. The state had no licensing requirement for family day care. Instead, under a recently instigated plan, providers could voluntarily apply for Certificates of Registration through a local sponsoring organization, which would then be responsible for monitoring (at least once every two years) and training. Most of the Born and Raised caregivers I interviewed, however, had not yet heard of the new regulation and those that had heard of it had no plans to register.

Providers who cared for more than five children were required by state law to become licensed as day care centers. Taking care of more than five children without a

license was illegal, and all the caregivers I talked to were well aware of this limitation. However, since most took care of only a few children or, in the case of larger groups, children on staggered schedules, almost all operated legally.

I formally interviewed nine Born and Raised babysitters about their work. I talked to those who work in their own homes as well as those who work in the children's parents' homes. These informants gave me additional information about the work of their friends who were also babysitters. I also learned about the work of Born and Raised babysitters from the parents who were their employers.

The Work of Babysitting

I wanted to know how babysitters got into their particular work and how it fit into their overall history of employment. I encouraged them to talk about how they made their decisions to become babysitters and what other alternatives they might have considered at that time. I also asked about how satisfied they were with their jobs of babysitting.

Deciding to Become a Babysitter

In the following accounts, women describe the circumstances surrounding their decisions to become babysitters.

The first, a grandmother who has always lived in the same neighborhood, has been a babysitter for nineteen years, since the youngest of her children approached school age. She recalled, "A neighbor down the block asked me if I'd watch her little one. I said fine. And ever since then my name's been getting around the neighborhood, and I've been doing it ever since." Her only other employment was as a clerk at Woolworth's the year before her first pregnancy. She says that she also got into babysitting because she was lonely. She had always hoped to have five children, but because of an Rh factor had only three. She wanted more children to care for but also wanted to be with her own children during after-school hours. Although she likes child care, she would not want to work in a day care center because there would be "too many children." She values her independence as a babysitter, explaining, "I like to do what I want to do."

Another grandmother, whose husband had deserted her early in their marriage, was a waitress for twenty years, but when the restaurant went out of business she decided to try something else. She likes service jobs and a personal relationship with

her employers. As a waitress she had enjoyed "meeting the public" and working for tips. "I'd never work in a factory," she says, "I'm not the kind of person to be in a factory eight hours a day." She put an advertisement in the local paper offering to do housecleaning, and the people she cleaned for asked if she would do babysitting as well. "I started doing that," she says, "I do everything." She likes both jobs, and of babysitting she says, "The money's good--plus the kids."

A third grandmother, recently divorced from an abusive husband, began babysitting 18 years ago when the youngest of her four children was seven. Her first babysitting job was for the daughter of factory workers, a child the same age as her own daughter. She provided daily after-school care for the child, who played with her own children. She explained that she hasn't been a babysitter continuously. She worked at McDonald's after her children were all in school. Although she liked the job--"it kept you on the go; it was always busy"--the pay was low. She took another job at a bank where she would get higher pay and benefits but left after only one week because the work was "boring." Another time she interrupted her babysitting work for one and a half years to take a job as a home health aide. She liked the job, but the pay was low ($40 per week for part-time work) and she got no vacation. All in all, babysitting has been has most satisfying job. She is a person who enjoys working with people and taking care of them, but she also liked staying at home to care for her own children when they were young. "I enjoyed it," she says, "and we could make ends meet."

A younger woman, whose husband is sporadically out of work, moved to babysitting from a job as cashier, which she took after her two children reached school age. Her cashier's job at K-mart had been a rotating one, so that she sometimes worked Saturdays and Sundays. She learned from other babysitters what the going fee for caring for the children of professional parents was, and decided that as a babysitter she could earn the same pay as she earned as a cashier. She would also have her weekends free and be able to take care of her own children when they came home from school. She got her first babysitting assignment by answering an ad for a live-in babysitter but was able to persuade the parents to allow her to care for their infant in her own home.

Another woman who is a young mother has never had any other job than babysitting and says she has "always taken care of kids," starting as the oldest sister in a family of six children. "I was the in-house person, my mother's right-hand man. I always babysat." She started caring for children outside her own family when she was a teenager. Because she didn't finish high school she felt other job options were

limited. After her first child was born she took in another infant, whom she cared for from age six months to five years. After the birth of her second child she took no more outside children until her own youngest child was three years old. At that point, she began to babysit in her home for several children at a time. She got her first children by putting an ad in the newspaper, and since then it's been by word of mouth. She likes her work and says, "I'm only 27, and it makes me feel young. It makes me feel good. I like the little ones--up to four years." She explains that she can have no more children of her own because she's had a tubal ligation and so is glad to be able to care for children through babysitting.

Another young mother had worked as a receptionist but began babysitting after the birth of her daughter. She chose babysitting because "I tried to think of something that I could do and bring my daughter with me and still be able to concentrate on her and whatever else I was doing at the time. And I figured if it was going to be anything, it would have to be child care because that way that would be the job. I thought about it, and I thought, 'I really don't want to babysit,' but I just couldn't figure out any other way. And I did it." She works in the home of the infant she cares for and takes her own child along. She also does "light housekeeping" for her employers.

Considering the Alternatives

All of these women were mothers themselves. The older ones had uniformly followed a pattern of beginning babysitting after their own children were in full-day school. Although household income was low, they felt they could manage on their husband's earnings until then. The younger women had started babysitting earlier during the time when their own children were still too young for school. They still have the option of taking another kind of job when their own children start school. The youngest, now the mother of an infant daughter, began babysitting because she needed a job and wanted one that would allow her to also take care of her own child. The pattern is one of women who believe in taking care of their children themselves and who become babysitters as a way to augment their husband's earnings while maintaining their mother's role. The exception was the ex-waitress. She is the only one who was single when her children were young, and she took a job as waitress. It was only after her children had grown and no longer depended on her financial support that she started babysitting.

In considering alternative employment, none had held any jobs other than the low-paying ones where women have traditionally been employed--receptionist, clerk,

cashier, waitress, and home health aide. The employment alternatives to babysitting were not attractive and were limited by the women's lack of college or other career training. Only one really wants to find other employment. Her plan is to stay on as a babysitter while her child is very young, but to look for other employment after a year or so. Her aspirations are for a "career." "I have spent as many years as I would really like to working for an hourly wage," she says. She is thinking of "selling a product or finding out how to invest or getting into computers."

Because of their obligations to home and family, all of these babysitters wanted to work in their own homes or near their homes. This also limited their employment opportunities. (A previous generation of Born and Raised mothers had worked at nearby factory jobs when they were forced by economic circumstances to take outside employment, but now there are fewer manufacturing jobs in East Urban and those that remain are largely filled by Hispanic and Indian women.) Three women worked at housecleaning as an additional job to babysitting. They appeared to view both jobs as extensions of their domestic roles at home and considered themselves qualified and experienced for both kinds of work because they had developed those skills as wives and mothers within their own households.

Job satisfaction was high, with some women mentioning deep emotional commitments to caring for other people's children as a substitute for additional children they were unable to bear themselves. Babysitting among the Born and Raised in East Urban is a job where the demand exceeds the supply, where specialized training is not a requirement, and where a woman can work without unduly compromising her dedication to traditional family values.

Fees

I asked babysitters what they charged and how they decided on the fee for their services. I was also wanted to know how fees were negotiated between parents and caregivers, whether fees were increased over time, and whether payments were calculated by the hour or by the week.

Setting Fees

I had been told by people familiar with child care services in East Urban that Born and Raised babysitter fees ranged from $1 to $6 an hour for full-time care. I found this borne out by the babysitters I interviewed, who used a variety of methods in establishing their fees.

One woman, who cares for the children of professional families, charges everyone $5 an hour. "Everybody knows it's $5 an hour," she says. Taking care of four children, none full-time, she earns "maybe $300 a week." Last year she charged only $4 an hour. When she raised the fees, nobody complained. Then her husband asked, "Why don't you charge them $7?" But she answered, "No, I don't want to be greedy. I couldn't do that."

Another woman provides in-home care for an infant and takes her own daughter along. She charges $5 an hour for babysitting plus "light housekeeping." She asked for $5 because she figured that would be what she would need to pay her bills. She usually works 25 hours a week (because the mother is a part-time teacher) and supplements her income by running a commercial office-cleaning service with her husband.

Another babysitter charges varying amounts per hour according to what she feels the traffic will bear. She justifies her fees by saying, "The people I babysit or clean for, they all have a lot of money. They've come from the City." She has worked out fees of $100.00 a week for 19 hours of care (which comes to $5.26 an hour) for one child, of $5 an hour for another, of $6 an hour as a combined fee for two siblings she cares for together, and of a combined fee of $4 an hour for two siblings whose mother didn't want to pay more. Of the latter arrangement, she said, "I gave it to her for $4, but I don't think it's worth it." Overall, she usually earns about $200 a week for babysitting and supplements this by taking care of children at a gym while their mothers are in an exercise class and by doing housecleaning. In contrast to her hourly babysitting fees, she earns $25 or more for an hour of housecleaning--$100 for one morning's work.

When another babysitter was offered the job of taking care of a child three years ago when he was an infant, she asked for $3.50 an hour from his professional parents. The boy's mother said she could hire someone else for $2.50, so they compromised at $3. The babysitter feels that coming down in price helped her to get the job. The boy's mother praised her by telling her "I seemed like I wasn't out for the money." The child's parents had originally wanted someone who would care for their son in their home and clean their apartment as well. The $3 compromise allowed the babysitter to care for the boy at her own home and eliminated the housecleaning.

Without consulting the babysitter, the boy's parents shifted from paying $3 an hour to a raise of $30 a day. Two years later, again without saying anything to the babysitter, they raised her payment to $40 a day. When the father first paid her at a new rate of $200 a week, she exclaimed, "You paid me too much!" "We thought you should get

more," he explained. But the following week she was cut back, without warning, to three days' work so that the child, now three, could attend a private day care center two days a week. As a result, the babysitter's weekly payment was reduced to $120.

This babysitter would like to take care of an additional child from another family, but is not sure whether that would be acceptable to her present family even though she now works for them only three days a week. Her own family finances are tight. Her husband earns only $12,000 to $14,000 a year. She "manages" three buildings in exchange for rent, and her husband does some plumbing "on the side" to make ends meet.

Another woman, whose present job is providing in-home care for a 14-week-old boy whose parents are both lawyers, works for the family three and a half days as a babysitter and a fourth day as a housecleaner (although she also does some cleaning during the rest of the week). During the fourth day of cleaning, the child's mother, who works only part time, takes care of her son. The babysitter began by charging $5 an hour for babysitting and $10 an hour for housecleaning. She now earns between $240 and $260 a week for a minimum of 35 hours of combined child care and housework.

She is not sure how that works out by the hour but guesses that she's been given a raise for her babysitting hours. She has no formal arrangement for overtime although she is paid by the hour and says of her employer, "she always gives me extra. Just last week we were arguing about the money." The "argument," as the babysitter explained it, was that she was protesting that she was being overpaid. She is proud that her employer "thinks she's underpaying me and that I'm worth more." When I asked if she considered herself worth more, she answered, "No, they are nice people, and I'm comfortable here."

Over the years this babysitter has progressively raised her fees. Since she started with parents whose pay was lower, her fees have not only gone up with time but also in response to parental earnings. "Professional people can pay more than factory people" is how she explains it. She recently heard that some East Urban professional parents are hiring babysitters from the City, Jamaicans who charge $6 an hour, the highest fees she'd heard of. She thinks this must be for housework as well as babysitting because she cannot imagine that black women could command those fees for babysitting alone.

Another babysitter, who works for working-class parents with such jobs as deliveryman, truck driver, restaurant worker, and factory seamstress, charges everyone $3 an hour except for her friend's grandchild for whom she charges only $2 an hour "as a favor to the family" and because she "knows they need money." In explaining her low rates, she says, "If it was me, and I was trying to help myself out, I'd want to afford it." She says she wants "to help out" when families face "these high prices." She makes the point that she's not in the business for the money.

Another woman, a single parent, who also cares for children whose parents have low-income jobs, varies her fees according to what she judges parents can pay. She charges $3 an hour for one child that she cares for two days a week. She charges $4 an hour for another child who stays with her every evening six days a week. Another child, who stays two nights a week, is charged $4 an hour. She also cares for her niece and nephew every night from 7:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. for only $80 a week, a lower fee because they are relatives. By taking care of five children on different schedules, she is able to make about $350 a week.

Babysitters charged fees according to household income, but there was considerable variation within each category. Fees were negotiated within a rather broad spectrum of $3 to $5.50 an hour for children of professional parents to $1 to $3 an hour for children of lower-income parents. It is customary to charge less for siblings, regardless of the income of parents. Since this family day care was not subsidized by government funding, babysitters, in effect, subsidized fees by charging less to needy families. Professional parents also paid relatively low fees, when considered as a percentage of two-career earnings paid for child care. These parents were willing and able to pay much higher rates for housecleaning than for child care.

Hourly or Weekly Payments

Babysitters who worked for lower-income families were paid by the hour. Those who worked for professional families were paid either by the hour or by the week, but some babysitters appeared to be uncomfortable with weekly payments and said they preferred to be paid by the hour. They feared that weekly payments might lead to their having to work extra hours without extra pay, but they were also uneasy about the possibility of being paid for hours they might not have actually worked. One said, for example, that she asked to be paid by the hour so she would not be overpaid when parents skipped a day or required fewer hours of care. Another babysitter expressed

a similar sentiment when she said, "I want to get paid for what I work" (the implication being, not for unworked hours).

Most of the women I interviewed did at least some night babysitting for which they charged by the hour and at reduced rates if the children slept. Higher income parents hired babysitters for night work when the parents went out for social occasions. Low-income parents required child care to accommodate night shift working hours, and this care was sometimes overnight in the caretakers' homes.

Negotiating Fees

The women who worked for professional families had varying attitudes toward the amounts they received in fees. One who worked for professional parents bargained as best she could for higher fees with the justification that her employers "have a lot of money." Another, by contrast, was proud that her employers, both lawyers, considered her "underpaid." She did not want to be seen as money-minded, nor did she want to view her employers as in any way exploitative. Instead, caregiver and parents operated within an arena of mutual appreciation of "niceness."

Although good babysitters are considered by professional East Urban mothers to be in short supply, parents appeared in these accounts to have considerable negotiating power in setting the terms of employment. In two instances they were able to bargain and reduce the babysitters' asking fees. Once babysitters began work, parents usually determined when and if raises should be given. Professional parents criticized babysitters who were overtly concerned with raising fees for putting money before devotion to child care, an attitude that worked in parents' favor in setting fees.

Babysitters who worked for low-income parents set rates according to what they judged to be fair in light of parental earnings. These babysitters were the ones who saw themselves as "helpers" to families having a tough financial time. But even babysitters working for high-income families put themselves at a disadvantage when they insisted on being paid only for hours worked as a way of displaying "fairness" toward the families that employed them.

Benefits

None of the babysitters interviewed received social security or health benefits from their employers. Most received no payment when their employers decided to keep their children at home or for holidays and vacations. The exceptions were those babysitters who mainly cared for children from one professional family. These

babysitters arranged to take their vacations at the same time as the family and were paid during that time.

One babysitter, who had always been paid by the hour and had worked as a babysitter for many years, was finally beginning to reconsider her position of not being paid when her employers took days off and didn't need her services. "Maybe I'm going to have to put my foot down and say, 'If you're off that has nothing to do with me. If I'm off sick, fine.' But," she added with a laugh, "I never admit I'm sick."

Although babysitters receive almost none of the benefits ordinarily accorded to employees, they accept these arrangements without overt protest. They view themselves as self-sacrificing, caring individuals who prefer to endure hard working conditions and low pay rather than to make demands of the families they serve.

Questions of Legality

Group Size and Licensing

The numbers of children cared for by the babysitters I formally interviewed ranged from one to eight (the latter in addition to the babysitter's own two children). State law requires that anyone who provides child care for six or more children under the age of six must be licensed as a day care center. (One's own children and those for whom no fee is charged are excluded, but caring for more than eight children at one time is illegal.) Although few people had heard of the recent plan of voluntary registration of family day care providers, the one regulation that all babysitters knew was that it was illegal to care for more than five children at one time.

Babysitters who cared for low-income parents' children cared for more children than those who cared for high-income parents' children. The only babysitters I heard about in East Urban who were caring for more than the legal number of five children were caring for children whose parents were low-income. Since fees charged to low-income parents were lower, those babysitters who worked for low-income parents had to accept larger numbers of children to generate more income. It is also likely that professional parents will not use babysitters who care for large groups of children. When we interviewed professional parents, they said they strongly preferred in-home babysitters or those who would care for their own children exclusively.

Babysitters caring for the children of professionals preferred to take a child from infancy (usually from six weeks to three months) until the child entered preschool.

Since career mothers were apt to go back to their jobs when their children were infants, babysitters could then build an ongoing and steady relationship with one family. Because it is customary to charge less for an additional sibling than for the first child, one child each from different families is most profitable for the babysitter, but babysitters working for professional parents seldom care for more than two children at one time.

Babysitters who cared for larger numbers of children from lower-earning parents accommodated to their various working schedules. These parents were more apt to work irregular shifts than were salaried professionals whose work was basically from nine to five (but often required staying late). This meant that even if babysitters of low-paying parents took care of a larger number of children, the group size at any one time might never be more than three or four.

One woman, for example, caring for five children of low- income parents, in addition to her own two children, had the following schedule of children:

1. 18-month-old, five days, 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
2. One-year-old, six nights, 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
3. Two-year-old, two evenings, 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
4. Five- and seven-year-old, five full nights a week.

In general, babysitters preferred to care for no more than a few children and considered groups larger than legal size to be unfeasible. One, who has just started caring for her own infant and one other child, when asked if she might take more children answered,

> Well, I don't know if I would want to do that. Because it's a very, very hard job. You know, people don't realize how hard it can be sometimes. And I think for myself I'm just not the type of person that can take care of a lot of kids. Right now anyway. I mean if I had a lot of experience I would think about it, but I don't know if it's a good idea for now. It takes a lot of patience.

When asked about group size, another woman said that she had heard of only one babysitter who cared for more than five children--a woman who took seven. When I asked if she herself would consider taking a large group, she quickly replied, "It's totally out of the question." She explained, "You couldn't go to the park. I'd take an infant and two toddlers or three toddlers. But you can't do two infants. There aren't enough

hands." Even though people knock at her door seeking after-school care, she won't take more children.

Only one woman appeared undaunted by larger numbers of children. She had once cared for seven. Although they were "mostly at different times," she sometimes took six together at once--one 14-month-old, three 16-month-olds, and two two-year-olds. "It was so much fun," she recalled enthusiastically, "they were all so good."

No charges of illegal numbers of children have been brought against any babysitters in East Urban, so prosecution poses no apparent threat. Even so, these babysitters appeared to have stayed, on the whole, within the law for other reasons than group size restrictions. Because their services are in demand, they could have increased the number of children they cared for. What limited group size was parent preference and the babysitters' assessments of their own limitations.

Reporting Income

Although babysitters, for reasons of their own, mostly stayed within legal limits of group size, they were not so law-abiding when it came to reporting their income for tax purposes. None of the babysitters interviewed paid taxes on her earnings, and it was commonly assumed that all East Urban babysitting was "off the books" as a source of income. Some babysitters asked to be paid in cash, thinking that would protect them from government tracking. Others were willing to accept checks but assumed they would not be prosecuted.

The babysitters did not know if their employers used the dependent care tax credit (which allows employed parents to deduct a portion of their child care expenses from their federal taxes), but none had been asked to supply their employers with social security numbers. Nor would they have wanted to for tax reasons. The general attitude among Born and Raised babysitters toward evading taxes was that "what you do is your business, what I do is mine."

Since their earnings were low, babysitters felt they could not afford to pay taxes. As one explained, "I don't want to work that I have to pay taxes. It's not worth it." Another said that she had been on public assistance after her husband moved out and that her babysitting earnings had enabled her eventually to leave the welfare rolls. Even so, she did not report her child care income. Instead, she claimed that she was receiving financial support from another member of her household.

Another woman said of her professional parent employers, "They never said nothing, so I never. I get paid by cash. No checks." When asked whether that meant that her employer parents did not claim their child care expenses as a tax credit, she answered, "They probably connive it some other way. If you're in business, you probably can. Not that I care."

In not reporting their income, babysitters followed the community custom of transacting informal business between individuals on a non-reporting, cash basis. At the root of these practices is a deep-seated resentment of government interference into what are considered private matters. Consequently, it is impossible to tell how reporting of income would affect these babysitters' incomes. We could assume that with their general household income and the business deductions they would be able to claim, taxes on their earnings would be negligible, if at all, but this is not the way babysitters view their situation. Their viewpoint is that if they were subject to taxes, babysitting would not be "worth it." To them babysitting is only viable as work if it is untaxed.

Working Conditions

In Whose Home?

When babysitters described their work, they talked about deciding whether to work in their own homes or in the homes of children's parents. Those who cared for children from only one family worked either in their own homes or in the homes of the children's parents. Babysitters who cared for children from more than one family worked in their own homes.

Babysitters who worked in their own homes gave various reasons for preferring this arrangement. Those who have children still living at home wanted to combine babysitting with caring for their own children--either full-time care for their pre-school children, after-school care for their school-age children, or preparing meals for their grown children. They also wanted to combine their babysitting with caring for their husbands and dependent parents. Two women I interviewed took care of their mothers during the day during times that partially overlapped with babysitting.

Another reason babysitters gave for preferring to work in their own homes was so that they could do their own housekeeping as well as babysitting. They resisted having to lower their high housekeeping standards because of babysitting duties. The older women especially prided themselves on their spotless houses. A traditional Born and

Raised housekeeper in East Urban may dust, vacuum, and scrub floors every day in addition to doing the cooking and laundry. One woman complained that she was no longer able to wash her curtains every month because of babysitting duties and now had to make do with only twice a year.

When these women become babysitters, they try somehow to combine child care with their usual large amount of housework. One gets up at four or five in the morning and does her housework before babysitting. Others try to accomplish as much as they can before it's time to take the children to the park or they houseclean during naptime. The only serious injury reported to me that occurred during babysitting was not to a child but to the babysitter. While she was vacuuming her carpeted stairs, the machine toppled down on top of her, gashing her head. Luckily she was able to find a neighbor who could care for the children while she walked to the nearest hospital for treatment.

Born and Raised parents look for a clean house as a sign of quality care. The parents I talked to praised their babysitters by saying that you would never know from the appearance of the house that children had been there. For these parents a house that showed no evidence of child activity was the house of a person with high standards of cleanliness and was a safe, healthy place to leave children.

Doing housework for one's own family is very different, however, from doing it for other people's families. When babysitters work in parents' homes, they are usually expected to do at least "light housework" as well as child care. But doing professional housework is considered a lower status job than babysitting, even though middle class parents value Born and Raised women for their housekeeping skills and pay them at much higher rates for cleaning than for babysitting. One babysitter, in describing a friend who does babysitting, laundry, and housework in the home of two lawyers, commented disapprovingly, "She's like a a maid. I don't want that." She valued her independent status in her own home over being a type of servant in someone else's home, no matter how well paid.

Those babysitters who cared for children in the parents' homes did so at the parents' request, and these were all professional parents. Babysitters usually provided their own transportation although they would be given a ride home if they had to stay later than usual. Most babysitters, however, live within a few blocks of the parents' homes where they babysit. Babysitters resist staying late if they have family obliga-

tions such as dinner-making, but one babysitter takes the child to her own home if the parents are delayed.

A beginning babysitter who placed an advertisement in the paper to do in-home child care and now has such a job says she doesn't care whether she works in her own home or not. She thinks it might be "more comfortable" to work in her own home but that it's "good to get out to work and then have your home to yourself."

Although the pattern in general is to do one kind of babysitting or another, either in the parents' home or in the caregiver's, some women do both. One woman who had cared for children in her own home for many years was recently persuaded to take care of an infant in the parents' home on the promise that when the baby grew older, she might take him to her house. She has mixed feelings about the arrangement. On one hand, "there are many things I'd like to do at home," she says, mentioning housecleaning tasks in particular. On the other hand, she says with obvious surprise, "I find I enjoy being here so much. It's like a break from my house. It's relaxing."

In their own homes women are better able to combine babysitting with their traditional roles as nurturing mothers and capable housekeepers. They take pride in their abilities and skills and do not want to be forced to lower their ideal standards because of babysitting work. Although it is career women who are often described as wanting to "have it all" when they aspire to be ideal wives, mothers, and executives, these women who work as babysitters also try to "have it all" by maintaining their traditional roles while taking on the extra responsibilities of babysitting.

Babysitters who work in the homes of parents face problems of double responsibilities to two families, their own and their employers'. Unlike "au pairs," young women who have no family responsibilities of their own, the Born and Raised babysitters must meet their employers' demands while maintaining their own family obligations. Although going out to work has some compensations, such as "getting away" from home, these babysitters are women who prefer traditional women's work to "outside" employment and would, in the main, prefer to stay in their own homes.

Loneliness

Whether babysitters work in their own homes or in parents' homes, they run the hazard of loneliness from lack of contact with other adults. My impression was that babysitters spend a good deal of their time on the telephone talking to relatives and friends. During interviews the telephone was apt to ring repeatedly, and obviously

familiar callers would be told to call back later. One babysitter told me how she had attached a 150- foot cord to her telephone receiver so that she could talk to her sister daily and care for children at the same time. Telephones were usually in the kitchen so that it was possible to telephone and supervise children or perform household tasks at the same time.

Parks, where babysitters take children to be outdoors, provide a place to talk to other babysitters, friends or relatives. Sometimes when I wanted to reach a babysitter I had been unable to contact by telephone, I would go to the park where I knew she made daily visits and find her there. Outings to shop or to run errands provide additional relief from being housebound. "I don't like to be cooped in the house," explained a babysitter who takes her charges to McDonalds if the weather is too bad for a park visit.

Babysitters place a high priority on staying in touch with their relatives and close friends on a daily basis. They are able to maintain these ties during babysitting hours by telephoning and by visiting in the park. Unlike office jobs which might place restrictions on talk with relatives and friends, the job of babysitting allows workers to keep these daily contacts. Nevertheless, loneliness can be a problem, particularly when the weather is bad. If these babysitters had voluntarily registered as family day care providers with authorized sponsoring organizations, they might have developed networks of colleagues, but none spoke of their lack of professional ties.

Stress

We might expect that caring for several young children would be arduous, but only one babysitter talked to me directly about stress. She described how she takes a bubble bath after the last child leaves and tells herself, "Don't worry. Calm down." She consoles herself by comparing her child care burden, where children at least go home at the end of the day, to the responsibilities her mother had in caring for six of her own children round the clock. Since most of the Born and Raised babysitters I talked to came from large families themselves, they may not think caring for a number of children is in itself a particularly stressful situation. If this is the case, younger babysitters, coming from smaller families and with shrinking kinship networks, may not be so experienced with caring for several children at once.

Child Rearing

Babysitters recognize the role of parents in setting standards for the care of their children. "They want it a certain way and you can't argue with them," explained one. At the same time, babysitters believe that the best care they can give children is to treat them as their own. One of the advantages of being a mother as well as a babysitter, as they see it, is to try, as much as possible, to apply the same high standards in the care of "outside" children as they have to their own children.

"Good" Care

When babysitters talk about what is important to them in caring for children, they emphasize physical care--keeping children safe, clean, and well fed. One who cares for a toddler answered the question of what was important as a babysitter by saying:

> To take care of them physically. Know when they need to be changed and fed. Take care of basic needs. And also to be able to give a little bit to them emotionally. To play with them and make them smile. I don't know how much one person who is not their parent can really give to them. You know I don't really think there is that much that's required. A lot of patience. I think that's one thing that you definitely have to have. If they start to cry, if one thing doesn't work, try another.

Children were judged by how "good" they were. Praise for children included "She's so sweet, she's really a good little girl" and "Basically, they are all good." Babysitters indicated that being "good" means being compliant and not resisting authority. Sometimes children were given rewards, candy or a small gift, for good behavior. Mothers were also praised for being "nice" and "sweet." "Nice" parents, like "good" children, it appeared, did not make demands.

I had planned no formal observations of how babysitters behaved with the children in their care and only observed casually when children chanced to be present during my interviews. I gained some information about the quality of care, however, from babysitters' accounts. For example, one babysitter reported several instances of children's "bad" behavior. She appeared to be at a loss as to how to handle children who were having difficulties. "I have a kid now who is badly behaved," she said, "but he's only eight months old. He does nothing but cry and cry. What are you going to do? I try to talk to him, I give him toys to play with. And the minute you pick him up

and start talking to him, he stops. But I can't just hold him. He's a big kid. And then I can't take care of someone else." The same woman reported about another child, "The kid drove me crazy. He constantly cried. He tried to put his own coat on and run out the door. 'Mommy, Mommy, I want Mommy!' I had to lock the door twice."

Another woman who did occasional after-school babysitting described how little boys making loud burping noises embarrassed her and then added, "Sometimes they're just obnoxious little brats, and I'm not in the mood to deal with it." She concluded by saying that babysitting was probably not the job for her.

In describing children's behavior as either "good" or "bad," babysitters did not speculate on why children behaved as they did. Rather than analyzing the incidents that led up to an outburst of "bad" behavior (as professionally trained caregivers are taught to do), they viewed children as acting out on the basis of their temperaments. Babysitters did not think about how they might change their own patterns of behavior to affect children in more positive ways. If children were "bad," there was nothing much to be done but endure the situation. Babysitters considered themselves lucky when they got "good" children, unlucky when they got "bad" ones.

Similarly, babysitters regarded their own behavior as an outgrowth of their temperaments rather than of acquired techniques. Most said that they felt they were suited to their work, by which they meant they were more tolerant than confrontational when children were difficult and were more accepting than rejecting of children's ways. One, who described herself as "very tolerant," said that parents have remarked, "God bless you and your patience." To illustrate her attitude she asked herself aloud, "Children, what trouble can they be? What's the worst they can do?" The only answer she could come up with was that they might annoy her downstairs neighbors by running.

"Healthy" Care

Born and Raised parents not only have strong opinions about what makes a "good" child but also about what makes a healthy one. They extol the healthful properties of fresh air and criticize parents from other cultural backgrounds who keep their children indoors. A babysitter says of a Filipino child in her care, who appears to her to be withdrawn, "I think he needs fresh air." Since they seldom have access to yards--and yards, in any case, are tiny--babysitters use the three city parks for getting children out of doors.

Born and Raised babysitters try to take their children to the park every day--some even when it's raining. One told me with pride, "I'm out in all kinds of weather. And I tell the mothers of all the kids I babysit, 'Give me umbrellas, raincoats.' I'll put them in plastic bags if I have to. And these kids are very seldom sick."

Even when babysitters care for several children at one time, they take them to the park. One explained that she was able to take five at once by having them hold each other's hands. She herself held the hands of those she "didn't trust." When they reached the park they dropped hands, and the children ran off to play. "Sometimes I'd have to yell at them," she said, as though that were unusual. She said she warned parents that their children might have small accidents, such as scraped knees, by being allowed to move about freely, but the parents were willing to run this risk. Babysitters talked about the healthful properties of fresh air, but it was obvious from their accounts that going to the park also provided children with the benefits of active and exploratory play.

Communicating with Parents

Babysitters reported that they had very little discussion with parents about their children's day once the initial period of employment was past. "You come, you go, you do your job," commented one. Only once did a mother telephone during my interviews. She called to say she would be late and also asked about her infant. The babysitter reported that the child was "happy and smiley" and had just gone down for a nap. At another babysitter's house we observed a mother picking up her toddler. When she asked how her daughter's day had gone, the babysitter answered, "She was really good. She ate good too." She added, "She had a little nap, and slept for about a half an hour."

Aside from reporting on illnesses or small accidents, communication between caregivers and parents appeared to revolve around a narrow spectrum of reporting of how children ate and slept and whether they were "good." If these babysitters had been trained in a more professional way of describing children's development and activities, they might have expanded their reporting to give a more detailed picture of the children's day. As it was, the reporting served to reassure parents that babysitters had been attentive to their children.

Daily Activities

We asked babysitters about their daily schedule and what they did with the children. One described her day with two two- year-olds and two four-year-olds. She gets up at six o'clock in the morning and does her washing and dusting before the children arrive. When the first child comes, she "runs to a lot of stores" with him before the others come so she can take them right to the park. The children come back for lunch, play for half an hour, and then go to the park again for two hours. The two-year-olds nap in a twin carriage during afternoon park time. Around 3:30 they come back home to cookies, juice, television, and playing with toys. "They relax because they're tired."

This babysitter also told me her rules for indoor behavior. She spreads a blanket on the living room floor to define the space where the children are allowed to play and watch television. The children even eat on the blanket, which can then be shaken out to get rid of the crumbs. "They don't walk around with cookies or anything. They're good. I say, 'If you walk around, I'm going to get ants.'" The children are not supposed to leave the living room or to sit on the living room couch. No rough play is allowed indoors. The two-year-olds play together, and the four-year-olds play together, with separate toys kept separately. Most of the toys came from the babysitter's own children who are now grown, but children can brings toys from home if they take them back at the end of the day. "And they're happy," she adds proudly. "No troubles."

This woman is clearly dedicated to keeping a neat house even at the expense of curtailing the activities of the children. But her rules were not that much out of line with what I gathered was general practice. Another babysitter described children eating on the kitchen floor because they "messed things up and pulled on the tablecloth." Another required a three-year-old to play with his modeling kit on a piece of paper to protect the rug. Except for free play in the parks, it seemed that children were closely controlled so that they would not mess up carefully kept houses.

The apartments of Born and Raised families are often full floors in aging row houses or tenements. A common room arrangement is to put the kitchen, where the family also eats, in the largest room at the rear, the main bedroom at the front with windows overlooking the street, and to use the one or two small windowless intervening rooms as combination bedrooms and living rooms.

When child care is in the babysitter's home, the usual arrangement of space is to use the kitchen and adjoining living room for children's activities. Children could play games or do projects at the kitchen table or watch television and play with toys in the living room. At the end of the day, toys and any equipment are picked up and stored away because this is space shared with the family. Living rooms serve multiple uses--for babysitting during the day, for family relaxation after school hours and in the evening, and for sleeping on foldout couches at night. With arrangements of this sort, it is important to women to keep things orderly and in place so that living spaces can be adapted to different family purposes.

Babysitters described their activities with children as "playing" with children rather than "teaching" them. They mentioned children's activities of coloring, board games, puzzles, train sets, play dough and play with model dinosaurs. Children are not included in household activities such as cooking or cleaning. Nor are children allowed to experiment with household objects in general use, such as kitchen utensils, but are rather confined to child-designated toys and games. No one described large motor activities that could be performed indoors. Instead, indoor activities are confined to eating, napping, television or playing with games and toys.

Any "teaching," according to babysitters, comes from television, especially Sesame Street. Television is an obvious help in keeping children engaged. One woman said she often turned on the same program twice as it appeared on different channels, and the children enjoyed watching both times. Babysitters said they restricted television to children's programs during the day, but when their own family members came home, children watched programs that the rest of the family wanted to see.

It appeared from babysitters' accounts of daily schedules and children's activities that children in care are kept well fed, clean, and safe. However, caring for several children in small rooms that are shared with family, and where orderliness is prized, places restrictions on children's activities. Except for going to the park, where children are free to move about more freely, children in care appear to have very little large motor activity.

I heard no accounts of babysitters encouraging or even taking note of dramatic and imaginative play, of fantasy, of storytelling or other expressive forms of activity. Children were not encouraged or draw or paint freely, to dance or sing (except occasionally with older children to television programs). No babysitter mentioned regular reading or book-centered activities. I was given the impression that Born and

Raised mothers did not raise their own children with these activities so there was no reason to expect that they would behave any differently with the children they cared for.

Attitudes toward Parents

The babysitters I interviewed were strong believers that, ideally, mothers should stay at home with their own children. This was one of the main reasons they had taken on babysitting as a job for themselves. Consequently, their feelings toward the mothers they worked for were ambivalent, especially toward those mothers who appeared to them to work by choice rather than necessity. One babysitter expressed this ambivalence toward the career mothers she worked for by explaining:

> I say I don't care what people do. I say what's the difference? They're paying me. As long as she pays me, I don't care. My girlfriends get annoyed. They'll say, 'How can she just leave her child?' I say, 'That's their thing.'

Then she added pointedly, "Of course, we never did that."

Others were more unequivocally opposed to the behavior of the career mothers who employed them. One commented:

> That's why at first I really didn't want to do child care, because I thought they should be with their child. I think that this society really has too many women working. Women should be staying home with their kids. I'm not saying that I'm telling them what they should do. But I think it's important not to have a society where kids are brought up by the babysitter. And that's happening much too often. So they have these women who have these careers, and they don't want to give them up. And so they continue to work, and they spend a month with the child, maybe two months, and they go back to a forty or fifty-hour week. That's just not right.

According to the babysitters' own families' traditions, young mothers work only when they consider it a necessity. This results in a double standard of behavior between women within the caregivers' families and community and the outside women who are their employers.

Other Family Members

When I talked to babysitters about their own family members, they discussed problems between their husbands and themselves rising out of babysitting arrangements more readily than they discussed problems of having their own children around when they babysat. It may be that they were reluctant to consider possible adverse consequences to their own children since it was usually for the sake of the children that the work had been undertaken in the first place.

Husbands

Some women said their husbands regarded the outside children as though they were part of the family. "He likes having the boys around because we never had a son of our own," said one. "The two boys are so nice that my husband feels like they're his grandchildren," said another.

Other women said their husbands resented the commotion of child care. Two said that when their husbands came home from work and wanted peace and quiet away from the children, they went to their mother's apartment (which in each case was in the same building) to escape. Another said her husband went into the bedroom and shut the door to be by himself.

One woman described her husband as abusive to her and her children. His idea of discipline for children, she said, was "go slap them in the face." When we asked her how he behaved toward the child she babysat for, she said, "It's different, your kids and someone else's. You can't do what you want with other people's children." Babysitters also described their husbands as putting up with babysitting activities as a trade-off for their wives staying at home. "He'll go along with it," said one, "because it keeps me home." One older woman was especially protective of her husband's feelings about her work. "I keep up my house every day," she said. "I don't want my husband saying to me, 'If this babysitting is going to interfere with your work here, then stop it.' So I try not to."

Ironically, this same woman concealed from her husband, a retired warehouse manager with no pension, how useful her income was to their household support. She regards the $300 she makes a week from babysitting as "my money," but explains:

> He never asks me what I do with my money. But, say, a telephone bill was a little higher than normal. I would put that money in there. And the mortgage went up. I never told him. I put my extra money in there.

> It might be like $75 a month. He gives me money every week. So much for food and so much for my budget. We call it a budget. But I never said to him, 'This went up $50. This went up.' Being I have it, I do it. And if I don't work someday, I'll have to say, 'Tommy, you have to give me a little more money.' But now I try to help him.

Husbands were clearly regarded as possible barriers to the work. These women appeared to see themselves as working on sufferance, and with their husbands' disapproval a constant factor to be reckoned with although I heard of no husbands calling a halt to babysitting activities.

Caring for Grandchildren

Those babysitters who were grandmothers had sometimes, like Mary O'Malley, been able to take care of both "outside" children and their own grandchildren. One, for example, was able to care for her grandchildren in their home from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. when the children's father, who worked a night shift, could take over until their mother returned from work at 4:30 p.m. This schedule allowed the grandmother to babysit for other children in the afternoons and evenings.

Others found that their babysitting for outsiders prevented them from also caring for their grandchildren. One grandmother would not help her daughter-in-law, a factory worker, because of her hours, which interfered with babysitting for another family. The grandmother, who was single and depended on her babysitting income, refused to give up the more lucrative work. She told her daughter-in-law, "I'm not going to lose out on $100 a week to babysit for you so that you can make all the money." (Her son had offered to pay only $40 a week.) She complained, "If you babysit for your relatives, they don't pay you nothing of what you think you should get, because you're related to them." Another grandmother, who babysits in a middle class home and whose daughter-in-law is now pregnant, said she is not interested in becoming a babysitter for her grandchild. "I don't want any more kids in the house messing it up," she says. "Now my house is clean." (Both of these cases, notably, involved daughters-in- law rather than daughters.)

Since the babysitters I interviewed all cared for "outside" children, care of children within their own family became more difficult. They not only faced constraints of time and competing responsibilities, but they and other family members had problems reconciling fees paid by parents outside the family with those paid by family members.

Conclusions

My interviews with babysitters from the Born and Raised community showed areas of strong commonality. All of these women were mothers whose work as babysitters was heavily influenced by their commitments to their traditional family roles. As wives and mothers, they aspired to ideal models of nurturing, devoted, hard-working womanhood. These ideals carried over into their jobs as caregivers and affected all aspects of their work.

Babysitting as an Occupation

These women intially chose the work of babysitting as an extension of their roles as mothers. Becoming a babysitter was not so much an ambition as an accommodation to conflicting pressures from economic necessity and family. Babysitting was viewed as a solution to the problem of earning money while at the same time staying true to their commitments to what they considered ideal behavior.

Because they liked to think of themselves as women who cared for children as an extension of their mothering role, they were willing to work for low fees, partly as proof that their motivation was love for children rather than working for money. When they worked for affluent parents, they were reluctant to ask for raises and preferred to let their employers decide when and if fees should be increased. By leaving these decisions up to the employer, babysitters were made to feel that increases were a result of devoted care rather than of a business transaction.

When they worked for lower-income parents, babysitters charged less, expressing empathy for the parents and identifying with them in a spirit of solidarity. They were reluctant to add to the difficulties of young, hard-pressed families by charging higher fees even when the result was having to take care of larger numbers of children in order to produce a sufficient income for themselves. Babysitters were more comfortable in the role of a helping hand, supporting others, even at expense to themselves, than they were in the role of a businessperson calculating reasonable fees to be charged to clients.

Although babysitters generally preferred to work in their own homes as a way of combining their roles of housewives and mothers with those of babysitters, they did accept positions at higher fees in the homes of high-income parents. In these cases, they were sometimes expected to do housework as well, for which they were paid at a higher rate per hour than for babysitting. The difference in fees charged for babysit-

ting and for housecleaning reflect differing attitudes toward the two types of work. Babysitting fees are lower because market rates are less likely to prevail in work which is governed by personal relationships and idealistic commitments.

Although Born and Raised women pride themselves on being law-abiding and ally themselves with the forces of law and order, babysitters do not report their earnings as income to be taxed. Although their actions, in this case, seem inconsistent with their beliefs, in fact they are following traditional community customs. Antagonistic to what they consider to be bureaucratic government intrusions into family life, the Born and Raised community takes it for granted that privately arranged transactions will be "off the books." Since babysitting is viewed as a service negotiated between private parties, it falls within the category of activities commonly accepted as being not subject to taxes. This view tends to make babysitting appear less a business transaction and more a favor offered to friends or a personal service offered to those who need it. Because they do not report their income, babysitters are ineligible for government-supported benefits such as social security and federal unemployment insurance. This reinforces babysitters' views of their work as being different from regular employment.

As long as babysitters, such as these in the Born and Raised group, see themselves in traditional women's roles, they will continue to subsidize services by keeping fees low. This works to parents' advantage and lessens the burden on government funding. But younger women, with different ideas of what women's work should be, may not be so willing to sacrifice themselves for other people's children. They may become more business-like or they may avoid babysitting altogether.

Quality of Care

Babysitters do not discuss their care of children in terms of child-rearing practices. Whether children are "good" or "bad" appears to them to be a given. What they are responsible for, in their eyes, is the safety and health of the child. To this end they set high standards in such areas as cleanliness, protecting children from accidentally hurting themselves, getting children into the out-of-doors, and making sure that they are well fed. When babysitters take care of either their own relatives or the children of other Born and Raised families, they work within family traditions and community-accepted norms of child rearing practices. What these children in care experience at home with their parents is congruent with what they experience with their babysitters. This is not the case when Born and Raised babysitters take care of the children of

"American" parents who were themselves raised in middle-class families. American middle-class child rearing practices often differ from those of the working class. Middle-class mothers, for example, are more apt to emphasize children's self-direction, working-class mothers to emphasize children's conformity to external standards of "good" behavior. [7]

Middle-class mothers tend to ignore these differences in child rearing. They say they value their working-class babysitters for the affection they display toward the children they care for. This places the emphasis on affective or "familial" behavior rather than on "teaching" behavior. Middle class parents will themselves assume the teaching role with their children, taking responsibility for their children's language usage and orientation to books. [8]

Since both parents and caregivers see babysitting as primarily custodial, there is little discussion with the parents about children except for reporting of daily routines such as naps and meals. Behavior is described only in the most general terms of "happy" or "good." By circumscribing the babysitter's role to one of an affectionate custodian, mothers and caregivers can avoid areas of potential conflict--cultural conflict, in the case of class differences, and conflicts around establishing authority over the child. Such distancing minimizes friction between the mothers who have chosen babysitting as their work and mothers who have chosen other, less family-oriented jobs.

In these babysitting arrangements, middle-class parents choose Born and Raised caregivers for quality custodial care offered by women whose community values--with their high priority on mothering skills--middle class parents respect. They count on themselves as parents to provide school-oriented "teaching," and they customarily send their children to private preschools to supplement child care by babysitters. By contrast, Born and Raised parents choose babysitters from their own group. They trust these women because they are like themselves and provide continuity in child rearing which reinforces their own value system. But to the extent that Born and Raised parents are beginning to see the value of early childhood education as preparation for school success, they may find non-professional babysitters lacking and seek more educationally-oriented child care arrangements as their children approach school age.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This study is based on a limited number of interviews, but the same social and economic forces that shape these parents' and caregivers' lives are at work in the lives of many other East Urbanites and of those living in cities similar to East Urban. Studying child care in East Urban raises issues that should be considered in legislating child care policy.

The task for child care policymakers is to devise legislation that will address the needs of all working parents and their children. The national debate on child care has so far been largely focussed on either high-income professional two-career families or on low-income families, particularly those leaving welfare for work. The Born and Raised families in East Urban represent still another large population of families who need child care because both parents are employed. Women in these families also provide much of the informal and unregulated family day care in cities like East Urban, either for their family and neighbors or for middle-class professional families.

In formulating child care public policy we must work to preserve and encourage what is good and functional about this informal and unregulated care while at the same time we must eliminate the abuses and inequities inherent in the present situation. (See appendix.)

Conclusions

Parent Choices

In the target study group, the Born and Raised parents' preferences for child care within the family or by relatives and well-known neighbors are strong and deeply rooted in cultural patterns.

Demand for Services

Mothers, departing from their traditional roles as wives and mothers, are entering the labor market, not only as a personal preference, but for economic reasons of supporting their families and improving their household's standard of living. Increasingly, therefore, working parents will need more child care.

Child Care Supply

Long-term and irreversible forces are shrinking this supply of informal and unregulated care. Among these are:

- smaller families,
- changes in the housing market,
- evolving roles within the family,
- rising costs of living,
- aspirations for higher standards of living,
- increased knowledge of the value of professional preschool education,
- and patterns of employment.

Informal and unregulated care must be supplemented by an expansion of regulated family day care, especially for infants and toddlers, as well as of licensed day care centers, especially for preschool-age children.

Unregulated Caregivers

Born and Raised unregulated babysitters often provide affectionate, safe, reliable, and affordable child care. In this respect, they perform a valuable public service and should be encouraged. On the other hand, they have little knowledge of the professional principles of child development, they are underpaid for their services, and they do not report their income from child care.

Existing informal and unregulated caregivers in our study have little motivation to become registered and cannot be counted upon to expand the supply of regulated care.

Regulated Family Day Care

As Born and Raised parents by necessity seek child care from outsiders, they will have to rely on professional standards of quality rather than on trust grounded in personal experience. They will also have to pay higher fees. Regulated family day care, subject to government standards and subsidized by public funding, would help to solve these problems.

Child Care Centers

Born and Raised parents increasingly seek early education experiences for their older preschool children--not in informal and unregulated settings but in licensed day care centers and Head Start. These parents need high quality early childhood education programs in licensed settings at fees they can afford.

Recommendations

1. Support quality child care no matter what its auspices, whether by relatives, by well-known and trusted neighbors, by regulated family day care providers, or by licensed day care centers.

Respect parent choices by trusting parent judgments.

Recognize the strengths of informal arrangements--that although they lack professional expertise they can serve to socialize children to family and community values as well as provide warm and caring surroundings.

Support quality informal and unregulated care by sensible exemptions to regulations (including exemptions for all care by relatives), by tax credits for low-income families with children, and by government funding of appropriate reimbursement of costs to eligible parents.

2. Support the growth of regulated (registered or licensed) family day care for those parents who have traditionally relied on family care but who, because of the unavailability of such care or because of preference, turn to professional care.

Recognize that for these parents, family day care-- particularly for infants and toddlers--may be a strong preference over center-based care.

Take into account that regulation of home settings requires sensitivity to cultural differences and family values.

Adequately compensate family day care providers for their work--both as a principle of equity and as an incentive for entering the regulated system to become professionally trained.

3. Work toward upgrading and expanding licensed child care centers.

Offset the income and ethnic and racial stratification in these programs by encouraging a mix of subsidized and full- paying parents.

Expand subsidized center-based care and raise eligibility guidelines so that more families qualify for reduced fees, to allow a greater mix of income-eligible families.

Raise the qualifications of child care center personnel (which will require increased salaries) to early childhood education standards so that centers will clearly qualify as education programs rather than as welfare services only.

Make child care centers responsive to local community values by encouraging professional teachers to learn from parents about local and family traditions as well as having parents learn from teachers about professional practices.

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The times urgently demand the formation of comprehensive and sound child care policies. But any national policy must respect the cultural settings in which people make choices about their children. We must never lose sight of the families our policies are designed to serve. Only by building policies that also respect the social fabric of local communities can we expect to succeed in our quest for an effective national policy.

Endnotes

1. See Bureau of the Census, 1987. These percentages were confirmed by another large-scale survey, by Kisker, Maynard, Gordon and Strain, 1988.

2. Fosberg, 1981, reporting on the National Day Care Home Study, estimated that in 1977 5,214,500 children were cared for in 1,827,500 family day care homes, only 6% of which were in any way government regulated. Corsini, Wisensale, and Caruso, 1988, estimate that more than 90% of family day care homes are operating outside any regulatory system. Professor Gwen Morgan, of Wheelock College, (in conversation) estimated that currently about half of family day care is regulated. She points out that this varies greatly from community to community, depending on such factors as regulations and the active presence of family day care networks.

3. Werner and Schoepfle, 1987, writing about the nature of ethnographic information, state:

> The ethnographer tries to obtain the cultural knowledge of the natives. This knowledge is rarely, if ever, made fully explicit. The nonexplicit aspects of cultural knowledge can often be inferred from casual remarks that must then be clarified by more systematic questioning. The natives, by definition, do not engage in systematic acquisition of knowledge....However, the ethnographer must transcend the accidental and replace it with controlled and systematic data illuminating the intracultural uniformity and variation of cultural knowledge (p.23).

4. See Glaser and Strauss, 1967, for a description of how theory can be "grounded" in ethnographic data.

5. See Zinsser, 1987, for a summary of these discussion groups.

6. See Nordberg, 1985, for the results of a reader survey for Working Mother Magazine on this subject.

7 . Kohn, 1969, discusses the differences between working-class and middle-class child rearing. Miller, 1989, basing her conclusions on the language distinctions of Bernstein, 1972, found differing perceptions of what children need according to the socio-economic differences of day care personnel. She states:

> A child socialized to existence in a setting of poverty and inequality may have low expectations and low self-esteem but highly effective coping

> skills. The street-wise working-class infants in this study knew better than to touch the grating propped precariously in front of the electric heater or to roll off the diapering table when their teacher left the room. Naive, protected middle-class children would surely be unprepared for daily hazards the low-income children handled with ease. Children socialized to a life of privilege may be confident, verbal, and creative, but they may join the epidemic of adolescent suicides when the real world proves colder and harder than expected (p.93).

8. Heath, 1983, compares the "speech communities" of low-income children and their middle-class teachers. Cochran-Smith, 1984, in a similar vein, analyzes "literacy events" in a middle-class nursery school setting and finds that teachers and parents share assumptions which lead to the children's early familiarity with books.

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Appendix

On the basis of the study we delineated three large areas of day care policy concern. Within each area we framed the following questions for policymakers:

1. In the target study group, parents' preferences for child care within the family or by relatives and well-known neighbors are strong and deeply rooted in cultural patterns. We also know that 48% of primary child care arrangements of employed mothers of preschool children are by family and other relatives and an additional 22% is family day care, in large part unregulated. How can we best preserve the strengths of this system while at the same time work toward eliminating its abuses?

a. Should care by all relatives be exempted from all regulations? Should such care be eligible to be subsidized through government funds?

b. If care by relatives were subsidized, would parents report their relatives' child care incomes in order to become eligible for subsidy?

c. How can parents be made aware of professional standards of quality in child care without belittling their experiences and family traditions?

2. To what extent should day care be funded by providing unrestricted monies to parents and to what extent should it be funded by increasing the supply of licensed care? Are there solutions which address both the needs of parents who use informal and unregulated care and of those who use licensed care?

a. What are the economic consequences of a refundable tax credit for children as compared to comprehensive legislation which will increase the supply of licensed day care centers and regulated family day care providers?

b. What are the strengths and limitations of the dependent care tax credit? What will be the consequences of the requirement that parents must now supply their care giver's social security number in order to claim the credit?

c. Will day care funding provided through the Family Support Act be spent on informal and unregulated care? If so, how will local market rates be established?

3. In the face of long-term and irreversible forces which are shrinking the supply of informal and unregulated care, how can we increase the supply of licensed care, particularly licensed family day care for infants and toddlers?

a. How can licensed family day care providers earn a living wage?

b. Should efforts at building the supply of licensed caregivers be directed toward those already providing such care or to newcomers?

c. How can we encourage family day care providers to take a "mix" of children when middle class parents are able to pay so much more than working class parents?